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PICTURESQUE NEPAL

AGENTS

AMERICA	THE MACMILLAN COMPANY 64 & 66 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK
AUSTRALASIA	OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS 205 FLINDERS LANE MELBOURNE
CANADA	THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA LTD St MARTINS HOUSE 70 BOND STREET TORONTO
INDIA	MACMILLAN & COMPANY LTD MACMILLAN BUILDING BOMBAY 309 BOW BAZAAR STREET CALCUTTA



A CORNER OF THE DURBAR SQUARE PATAN

PICTURESQUE NEPAL

PERCY BROWN

INDIAN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE ASSOCIATE OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART PRINCIPAL OF THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL OF ART CALCUTTA TRUSTEE OF THE INDIAN MUSEUM CALCUTTA, AND OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE ART SECTION



LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1912

PREFACE

THE interest which it is believed the countries of the Indian Borderland possess for a considerable portion of the reading community is the reason for the presentation of this venture. Information of any nature regarding a territory about which the recent literature is scanty may not be unacceptable, while impressions obtained first-hand of a region somewhat off the beaten track have a claim to be placed on record. Especially does this apply to the little-known State of Nepal, where the wonderful natural scenery and the creative genius of man have combined to make a powerful appeal to all lovers of the picturesque and of the imaginative in art. It is trusted that some of the observations here produced—particularly those relating to the remarkably artistic character of the Newars—may fulfil the purpose for which they are

intended. This character of the original inhabitant of Nepal is, like many other attractive qualities of the Oriental, now undergoing a marked transition, and the art craftsman of to-day lives in a world different from that of his forbears of the last generation. The brief photographic survey included in these pages is an attempt to preserve some of the main features of the latter's art, now falling rapidly into decay, and may in the near future serve in its pictorial capacity as a form of reference. At a time like the present when Eastern æsthetics are attracting the attention of scholars in all quarters, and particularly when the great field of Buddhist art is coming more into focus, a view of a little-known aspect of this subject may perhaps be the humble means of assisting in the elucidation of some of the complex problems with which this study is surrounded.

A short personal acquaintance with the buildings in the Valley of Nepal speedily revealed one fact which could not be overlooked. This was that the visit leading to the production of this work was made only

just in time, as before our eyes the modernization of the State was being conducted in a very emphatic manner. Down the main bazaar of Katmandu a row of electric light standards was being erected, and with the present progressive policy of the Nepal Durbar in other directions, the old is, almost hourly, giving place to the new.

For some years my duties have brought me into close touch with a unique collection of the art productions of Tibet and Nepal, and I have been able from time to time to add to this as occasion offered. A study of these specimens, however, was in no sense satisfying—owing to that barrier which naturally arises in connection with all Museum research. I refer to the scarcity of information regarding the object for which these specific works of art were devised, the dearth of any knowledge appertaining to the particular circumstances in which they were created, the lack of evidence relating to the religious atmosphere with which they were surrounded, and ignorance as to their general local associations. Before the full significance of this Central Asian school of art

could be realized, some idea as to environment, and that "inseparable accompaniment of beauty"—its fitness, seemed called for. The grim portals of Tibet—difficult as they were to open before—are now more hermetically sealed than they have been for centuries, and my only hopes lay in an investigation of these conditions as maintained in the neighbouring country of Nepal. Through the kind offices of the British Resident, Lt.-Col. Manners-Smith, V.C., I was enabled to put my desires into effect and to pay an extended visit to the Valley. The tour was a revelation, as it soon demonstrated to me that this comparatively small area was a veritable art museum of a particularly interesting character, with all the drawbacks to such an institution removed but with many an added charm. The results of my study of the artistic monuments of the Nepal Valley, and that series of examples from a kindred source in the Government Art Gallery, Calcutta, to which I have had such free access, are incorporated in the following pages.

To the Nepal Durbar, and especially to the

Maharaja Chander Sham Sher Jang Rana Bahadur, my thanks are due for the permission so generously allowed me to travel in the State and to publish this account of my impressions.

P. B.

CALCUTTA, *February* 1912.

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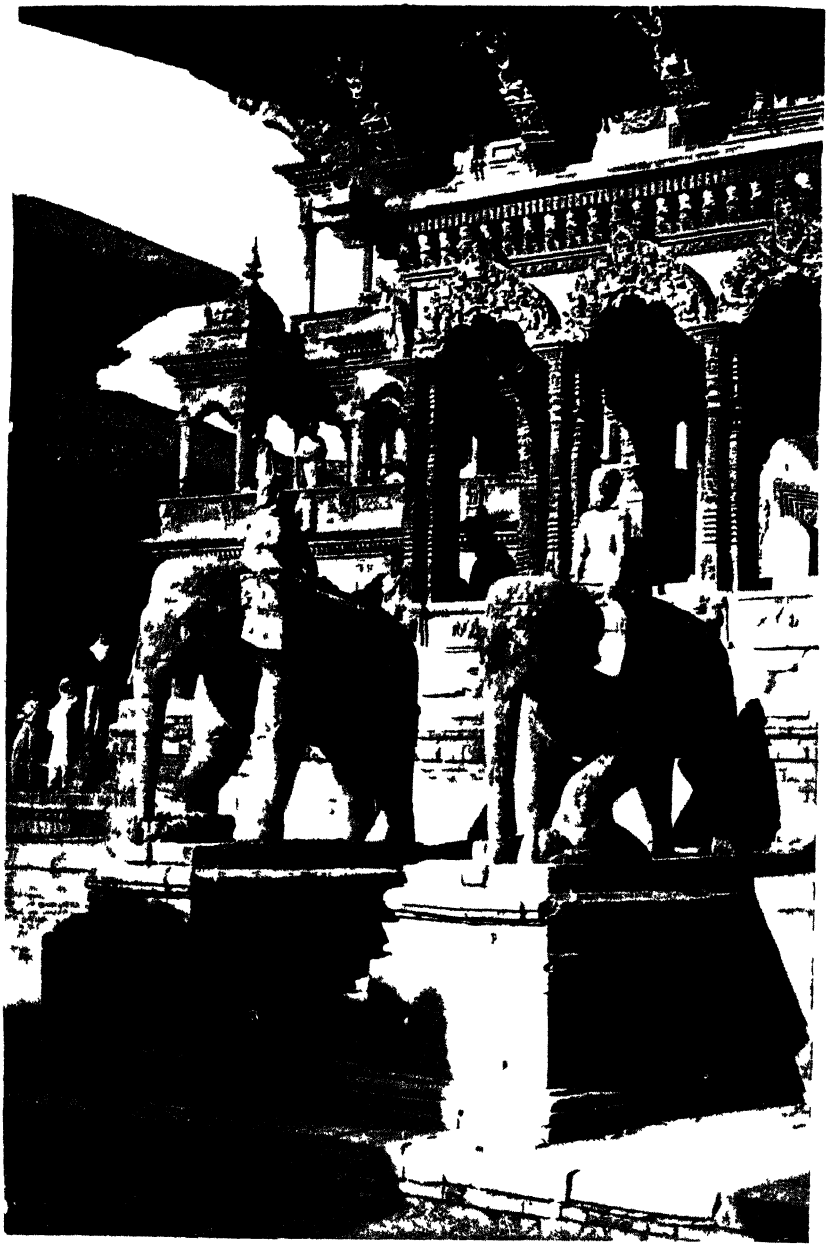
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CARVED ELEPHANTS OUTSIDE A TEMPLE DEDICATED TO KRISHNA IN THE DURBAR SQUARE AT PATAN

PICTURESQUE NEPAL

CHAPTER I

THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF NEPAL

Situation—Its Isolation—Legend of the Foundation of Nepal —The Valley of Nepal.

NEPAL is an Independent State wedged in between India and Tibet, and occupies a parallelogram 450 miles long and 150 miles wide, running almost east and west. Clinging on the north to the Himalayas at their highest point, it slopes down at the south into the flat rice fields of Hindustan. In its small width of 150 miles it can boast of such diverse conditions as the eternal snows of Mount Everest and the hot languid temperature of the plains of India. On the eastern border is the State of Sikkim with its high road into Tibet, and within a few short miles is the

populous European station of Darjeeling, the summer capital of the Bengal Government. Its western limit is in close proximity to the hill-station of Naini Tal, the seat of the United Provinces Government in the hot months of the year. Between these two centres of European influence with their offices and clubs, theatres and secretariats, rinks and regattas, and everything that is associated with English life, stretch the 60,000 square miles of Nepalese territory, in the greater part of which the foot of white man has never trod. This unexplored condition is mainly due to two causes. The first is that a considerable portion of the country is composed of inaccessible mountains, but the second and principal reason is that Nepal is the most independent of Independent States.

Here it may be necessary to define an "Independent" or, as it is sometimes called, a "Native" State of India. Briefly it is a foreign territory in the midst of the King's dominions. In the administration of its internal affairs the British Government, as a rule, is bound not to interfere. No British

police serve within its confines, nor is it garrisoned by British troops. British supervision is represented by a single political officer, whose moral influence is the slender thread that ties the State to the protecting British Power. Approximately one-third of the Indian Empire—included in India but excluded from the title of "British India"—is composed of territories coming under the head of "Independent States." Some of the largest and most important of these are Hyderabad, Kashmir, and Mysore, and, to give an idea of their size, Mysore State alone is greater in area than Greece. Nepal, regarded broadly, is of the size of England and Scotland combined, but its population, being about five and a half million, is thus only one-seventh of that of Great Britain.

It will be seen that one important condition of its independence permits the State of Nepal to manage its own internal affairs, and a feature of the State policy has been the strict preservation of this "splendid isolation." Poised on the natural bastions of the Himalayas, entered only by a few tortuous mountain

passes, which could be, and have been, rendered impregnable by a handful of guerillas, it is not surprising that Nepal can lay claim to being a State which has been least affected in all India by modern Europeanization. By this it must not be understood that Nepal has not taken advantage of the many improvements that an enlightened age has demonstrated as being beneficial. Its excellent system of water-supply, and the resultant decrease of the cholera scourge, is only one of a number of well-conceived schemes which a progressive administration has carried out for the welfare of its people. But this aspect of the country, however interesting, is outside the sphere of a work which proposes to deal mainly with its artistic and picturesque features.

The foregoing brief sketch of the country endeavours to depict Nepal as a great corrugation of mountain ranges, with a narrow strip of cultivated land where these mountains slope down to the plains. This represents a general bird's-eye view of the State, but if it were possible to actually regard it from this imaginary height, in the confusing array of

mountains one comparatively small oval space, almost in the centre, would at once arrest the vision. This is what is known as the Valley of Nepal. The one flat place in the whole of the tossed and tumbled configuration, like a green oasis in the midst of a rolling waste of mountains, this verdant piece of land typifies the very heart and soul of the country. Here is situated the life and activity of the State, almost what might be called the kingdom itself, for round it on all sides is but the wildest and most inaccessible region in the whole range of the Himalayas.

The origin of this striking formation in the midst of the mountains is the subject of several legends, but the one describing four divine visitations, as related in the *Swayambhu Purana*, is the most popular of these traditions. In substance this is as follows: That formerly the Valley of Nepal was of circular form, full of very deep water, and that the mountains confining it were clothed with the densest forests, giving shelter to numberless birds and beasts. Countless waterfowl rejoiced in the waters. The name of the lake was Naga Vasa;

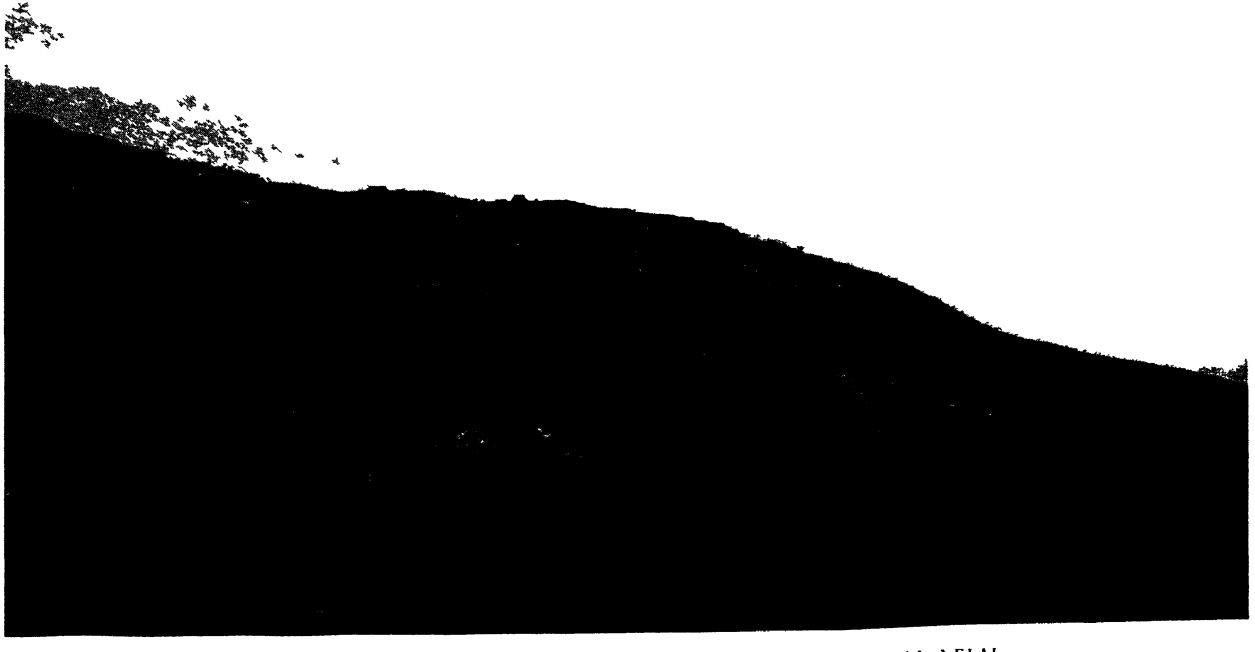
it was as beautiful as the lake of Indra. In the lake were many sorts of water-plants, but not the lotus. After a time, Vipasyi Buddha arrived, with very many disciples, at the lake of Naga Vasa, in the course of his customary peregrinations. Vipasyi, having thrice circumambulated the lake, seated himself at the north-west side of it, and having repeated several *mantras* over the root of a lotus, he threw it into the water, exclaiming, "What time this root shall produce a flower, then, from out of the flower, Swayambhu, the Lord of Agnishtha Bhuvana, shall be revealed in the form of flame; and then shall the lake become a cultivated and populous country." Having repeated these words, Vipasyi departed. Long after the date of this prophecy it was fulfilled according to the letter.

The legend then goes on to state that after Vipasyi came Sikhi Buddha with a company of followers. He walked thrice round the Naga Vasa, and, having done so, thus addressed his disciples: "This place shall hereafter, by the blessing of Swayambhu, become a delightful abode to those who shall resort to it from

all quarters to dwell in it, and a sweet place of sojourn for the pilgrim and passenger: my apotheosis is near at hand, do you all take your leave of me and depart to your own country." So saying, Sikhi threw himself into the waters of Naga Vasa, grasping in his hands the stalk of the lotus, and his soul was absorbed into the essence of Swayambhu, *i.e.* the self-existent.

The third Buddha to visit the lake of Naga Vasa was Viswabhu, and his pilgrimage to this attractive spot seems to have been made a considerable time after that of Sikhi Buddha. Viswabhu is reported to have observed: "In this lake *Prajna-surupa-Guhyeswari* (literally 'Creation') will be produced. A Bodhisatwa will, in time, make her manifest out of the waters: and this place, through the blessing of Swayambhu, will become replete with villages, and *tirthas*, and inhabitants of various and diverse tribes." Having thus prophesied, he thrice circumambulated the lake, and returned to his native country. The Bodhisatwa above alluded to was Manju Sri, whose name is revered all over Nepal as the original founder

of the country. After the coming of Viswabhu Buddha to Naga Vasa, Manju Sri, whose native place is very far off towards the north, meditating upon what was passing in the world, discovered by means of his divine science that Swayambhu the self-existent, in the form of flame, was revealed out of a lotus in the lake of Naga Vasa. Again he reflected within himself: "Let me behold that sacred spot, and my name will long be celebrated in the world"; and on the instant, collecting together his disciples, comprising a multitude of the peasantry of the land, and a Raja named Dharmakar, he set out upon the long journey to Naga Vasa. There having arrived, he began to circumambulate the lake, beseeching all the while the aid of Swayambhu in prayer. In the second circuit, when he had reached the central barrier of mountains to the south, he became satisfied that that was the best place whereat to draw off the waters of the lake. Immediately he struck the mountain with his scimitar, when the sundered rock gave passage to the waters, and the bottom of the lake became dry. He then descended from the



THE RANGE OF HIMALAYAN SNOWS SEEN FROM THE VALLEY OF NEPAL

mountain, and began to walk about the valley in all directions.

So runs the legend, and the cleft in the mountain caused by Manju Sri's sword is called the *Kot-bar* or "sword-cut" at the present time. It constitutes the pass or channel between the Phulchoah and Champadevi hills, through which the Baghmatti River leaves the valley. This ancient and artistic fancy differs very little from modern scientific fact, for there is little doubt that this part of Nepal was in remote ages a mountain lake, enclosed in the hollow of the same circular range of hills by which the valley is surrounded at the present day. "It is probable that in consequence either of one of those subterranean convulsions common to all mountain districts, or of the gradual but continuous elevation from its bottom, or from both causes combined, the lake burst its boundaries on its southern side, and that a large portion of its waters escaped into the lower hills through the channel which is now the bed of the Baghmatti River. At the present day the continuity of the mountain barrier around the valley is

so perfect, that were it possible by any means to block up that one pass through which the Baghmatti river flows towards the plains, not one drop of water could escape by any other channel, and, in the course of time, the accumulation of its pent-up waters would convert the valley again into a lake" (Oldfield).

In fulfilment of the traditional prophecy of Vipasyi Buddha, therefore, the lake has become "cultivated and populous," and the site it occupied is now the vital centre of Nepal. Here, within an area the size of the Isle of Wight—for the valley is but 20 miles long by 15 broad—all the principal interests of the State are concentrated. Here are the seat of the government, the palaces of the king and nobility, the temples and shrines, fishponds and gardens, rivers and burning-ghats, its ancient and modern capitals; here in this small hollow in the Himalayas, 4500 feet above the level of the sea, is all that appertains to the life, constitution, and history of this remarkable country.

Surrounded as it is by mountains, it is an easy task to scale one of the lower ranges,



STATUETTE IN COLLECTION OF MAITREYA, THE COMING BUDDHA
(*Height, inches*)

and thus place oneself in a position to see the valley spread out below like a map. Towards the centre of this oval a tall pillar-like erection may be observed from most situations, forming a useful landmark or fixed point by which the principal objects in view may be located. This is the tower of Bhim Sen, known as Bhim Sen's folly, and arises from out of the brown roofs of Katmandu, the modern capital. A number of large white buildings are to be seen intermingled with the more neutral coloured pagodas, and these mark the new palaces and residences of the royalty and aristocracy of the State. The general shape of Katmandu can be defined, which tradition has likened unto a sword, indicating that it is a long narrow city in the rough proportions of a weapon of that nature. Eight miles east of this is Bhatgaon, one of the old seats of the kings, and its round compact shape is not dissimilar to the *chakra* or "quoit" of Vishnu, the mythical form after which this city is supposed to have been built. A ruddy conglomeration of buildings among the green cultivation about two miles south of Katmandu

reveals the ancient capital of Patan, the legendary outline of which is said to follow the peculiar curves of the *sankra*, or "shell," another attribute of the same popular divinity. Three shallow streams can also be traced meandering past the towns and through the rice fields. These are the Baghmatti, the Vishnumatti, and the Manchra, which, flowing from north to south, before leaving the valley, unite and pass through a gorge in the south, ultimately joining the Gandak River in the plains of Hindustan. These are the main features of the valley, but many other interesting places are plainly visible from any commanding station in the surrounding hills. The position of some of the more important of these may be noted. About two miles east of Katmandu a conspicuous hill will be observed surmounted by an edifice with a gilt finial which glistens in the sunlight. This is the Buddhist temple of Shambu-Nāth, one of the holiest shrines of Nepal. West of the same point and distant about eight miles, a somewhat similar hill and crowning structure marks the Hindu temple of Changu-Narain. The famous burn-

ing-ghat at Pashpatti, visible by the pagoda turrets rising out of a wooded knoll, the great watchful eyes of the temple of Bodhnāth, and the garden and fishponds of Balaji, can also be located from most points. Almost every ridge or elevation has its hamlet—at least sixty of these being distributed throughout the valley—while isolated pagodas are to be observed on all the "high places," each of which marks some consecrated spot associated with the religious history of the country. When it is understood that within this small area there are 2733 shrines, the sanctified character of the Nepal Valley may be more fully realized.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF NEPAL

Mythological Period—Visit of Buddha to the Valley—Asoka's Visit—Chinese Record—The Malla Rajas—The Gurkha Period.

NEPAL, like Kashmir, differs from most Eastern countries in possessing an extensive historical literature. Much of this, however, deals with a vast mythological period, and the early history of Nepal is mainly a confused list of dynasties and kings, dates and periods, from which it is difficult to extract any lucid story. One of the most complete of these manuscripts states that "The Kiratis came into Nepal at the 15,000th year of the Dwapar Juga, and they ruled over the country for 10,000 years. The gods came into the country after the Kiratis. Dharmadatta Raja reigned 1000 years. After this the country remained without a king for 1000 years. Bisalnagara



THE RESIDENCY AT KATMANDU.

existed for 2000 years," and so on for many pages, until the brain reels with improbable figures and impossible facts. From this chaos, however, one or two landmarks may be determined which will materially assist in arranging the sequence of events in the early history of the country. Here it must be stated that authorities vary so widely in the extent of different periods that, until conclusive evidence is forthcoming, much of the older chronology must be regarded as conjecture.

The first incident of importance is the visit of Buddha to the Valley of Nepal in the fifth century B.C. At this time the country was ruled by the Rajas of the Kirati dynasty, and the Hindu religion, administered by the Brahmans, was the cult of the people. Buddha appears to have made a pilgrimage to most of the holy places in the valley—not a particularly arduous undertaking, as the Great Teacher was born, spent most of his life, and died, within close proximity to the Nepal Terai. His visit seems to have occurred at a fairly late period of his career, as by this time he was making his presence felt as a

reformer. In fact, during his brief residence in the valley, he secured over a thousand proselytes from the Brahman and Kchetrya castes, some of whom afterwards made names for themselves as disciples of the new religion. This event is said to have taken place about 450 B.C., during the reign of the Kirati king, Jitedasti, a ruler whose life was short but picturesque. He answered the call to arms to fight against the common enemy—the Kauravas—mentioned in that great Indian classic, the "Mahabharata," and, having advanced as far as Panipat in the Punjab, that fateful spot where has been sealed the fate of so many Indian heroes, seems to have been killed, for he never returned to his kingdom.

The Kirati dynasty continued, however, and, indistinctly through the mist of years, it is possible to conceive the general situation at this interesting period. Buddha had sown the seeds of his teaching among the Hindus of the valley, and several hundreds of his converts were left to spread the new religion. Below, in the great plains of Hindustan, slowly but surely Buddhism was gaining ground. For



COPPER-GILT STATUETTE OF MANJUSRI, THE FOUNDER OF NEPAL

over two centuries the struggle between Buddhism and Brahmanism continued, the former finally conquering in the third century B.C., when Asoka, the first ruler of the Indian Empire, proclaimed it as the national religion. At this time, therefore, another significant event is chronicled in the history of Nepal. In 249 B.C. King Asoka journeyed from his capital of Pataliputra (Patna in Bengal) to the various Buddhist holy places in the valley.

It is difficult to determine from the records the exact relationship which existed between this all-powerful monarch, whose dominions were as extensive as the Indian Empire of to-day, and the ruling raja of this small mountain kingdom, but what is referred to as a religious pilgrimage seems to have really resolved itself into an absorption of the lesser kingdom into the greater. Genuine local tradition—not merely literary legend—confirmed by the existence of well-preserved monuments, attests Asoka's effective possession of the secluded Valley of Nepal. He commemorated his visit by the foundation of a city and the erection of massive monu-

ments. The site selected for the new capital was some rising ground about two miles to the south-east of Katmandu, and there the city now known as Lalita Patan, or Patan, was laid out. Exactly in its centre Asoka erected a temple which still stands near the southern side of the palace or "Durbar."

What particular dynasty held sway at the time of this important event is not quite clear. It has been maintained that it occurred during the reign of a Kirati raja of the name of Sthunko, while other historians indicate that a representative of a very powerful dynasty—the Suryavanshi—occupied the throne. However, it is known that at a date previous to the Christian era a race of Rajputs overran the country and founded a long line of kings, which are recorded under the latter name. Buddhism seems to have been the religion of the people, but the ruling race were Hindus, and endeavoured to introduce into the temples the cult of Shiva. This is an early instance of the two creeds being brought into juxtaposition—the state in which they exist at the present day. The Suryavanshi dynasty came

to an end in the sixth century A.D., at which time the country was annexed by a powerful monarch of India—Vikramaditya of Ujjain. As the reign of this king determines an important period in the history of India, so his conquest of Nepal indicates a useful landmark in the records of the State.

Vikramaditya is to the Hindus what Alfred the Great is to the English people, and innumerable tales and legends, current to this day, familiarize his name to the rich and poor, the learned and the ignorant, the high and the low. He favoured the Hindu religion, but never persecuted the Buddhists. Personally he seems to have left few records of his occupation of Nepal, but indirectly his association with the country was significant. It coincided with the opening of a new dynasty which heralded a noteworthy king, and it began a new era. The dynasty is known as the Thakuri, and the king was Amcuvarma, while the era is that of the *Samvat*, the system on which historical dates are founded. Amcuvarma, or "Glowing Armour," has left several inscriptions which record much activity in his

reign, and he governed the country wisely and well. He died about 640 A.D., and the Thakuri kings continued in power for a considerable period—in one form or another until the eleventh century. During this dynasty an interesting picture of Nepal is recorded by a Chinese ambassador. The writer states that "the houses are of wood, painted and sculptured; the people are fond of bathing, of dramatic representations of astrology, and bloody sacrifices." Narendra Deva, the king of the Thakuri dynasty who is described in this document, is said to have "the prestige and pomp of an Oriental sovereign. He is richly dressed, and his surroundings are lavishly ornamented; his throne is festooned with flowers, and is in an atmosphere of perfumes; he shows a marked devotion to Buddha. The pavilions of his palace are covered with delicate workmanship. In the middle is built a tower of seven storeys, the grandeur and wealth of which is most remarkable." A map which accompanies this description indicates by the large number of towns that the valley was densely populated.

"Irrigation — practically and scientifically applied — makes the soil of great value. Buddhism and Brahmanism flourish in the principal temples, which are wealthy and well supported. Numerous monasteries shelter the Buddhist priests. Commerce prospers, and trade is well organized and directed." In other words, the Nepal of fifteen hundred years ago bore in many respects a striking resemblance to the Nepal of the present day.

From the decline of the Thakuri rajas in the eleventh century, until towards the middle of the fourteenth century, the country came under the sway of several lines of rulers, when, in 1324, another significant event is recorded. At this period in the plains of Hindustan, the great conflict was taking place between the Hindus and the Mohammedan invaders, which eventually led to a large part of India being converted to Islam. In the turmoil consequent upon the Afghan ruler, Ghyas-ud-din Tughlak, extending his conquests, Raja Hari Singha Deva of Ajodhya in Oudh found himself hard-pressed and compelled to flee for refuge into the adjacent mountains. Here,

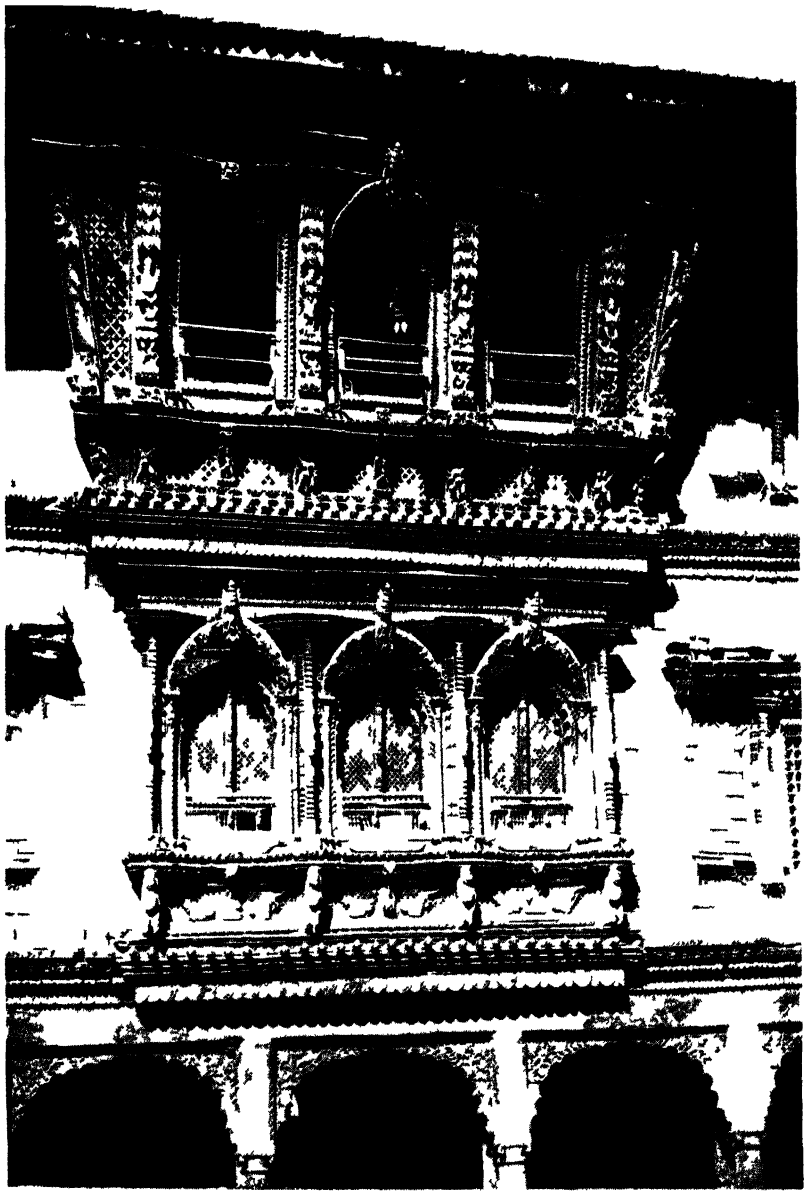
realizing a return to his own country impossible, he turned his back on it and proceeded to carve out a new kingdom for himself in the recesses of the Himalayas. He does not appear to have met with much resistance from the Nepalese, for he eventually established himself, in 1324, in the valley, and, during the reigns of four successive kings, the country was ruled by the Ajodhya dynasty. This is the only indirect influence the Mohammedan invasion had on the annals of Nepal.

Towards the close of the fourteenth century, the Ajodhya line having become extinct, the sovereignty reverted to the descendants of the previous dynasty, who are referred to as the "Malla Rajas." The reign of one of these—Jaya Sthiti Malla—who came to the throne about 1386, is chronicled as the most glorious of all the indigenous kings of Nepal. For the long period of forty-three years he ruled his subjects wisely and well, devising a code of laws, and reorganizing the caste system. In many directions he instituted useful reforms and, according to contemporary writings, was a most enlightened king. A

successor of this ruler—Yaksa Malla—having several sons, on his death-bed divided the State into principalities, which he apportioned among them. In this manner, in 1480, originated the three historic capitals of Nepal, namely, Patan, Bhatgaon, and Katmandu, at the present time the three principal centres of interest in the valley. For the next three hundred years the history of the country is composed of three separate stories, each one dealing with the events appertaining to one of the three principalities into which the State had been resolved. For the purpose of this sketch, however, it is only nccessary to observe that the Malla dynasty in this triplicate form continued without any very remarkable episode for over three centuries, when a most important change took place in the constitution of the country. This was the complete conquest of the State by the Gurkhas in the year 1768.

The Gurkhas claim descent from the rajas of Chitor in Rajputana. They were driven out of their own country by the Mohammedan invaders in the fourteenth century, and took

refuge in the hilly districts about Kumaon, on the western borders of the present confines of Nepal. From the early years of this settlement the Gurkhas were bent on extending their territories in an easterly direction, but made no important advance until a very ambitious king named Prithi Narain came to the throne in 1742. This ruler seems to have devoted all his energies to the conquest of Nepal, but it took him upwards of twenty-five years to accomplish his object. In 1768 he entered Katmandu, and in the course of the following year also subdued the remaining Newar principalities of Patan and Bhatgaon. He thus laid the foundation of the Gurkha dynasty, which has lasted until the present day. But the reign of the Gurkhas in Nepal has not been without its vicissitudes. Sandwiched as this small country is between the great empires of Tibet and India, it has several times come into conflict with both powers with varying success. The following are the main incidents. In 1790 the Nepalese invaded Tibet, and, coming into contact with the Chinese, had to retire and accept terms. Twenty-four years

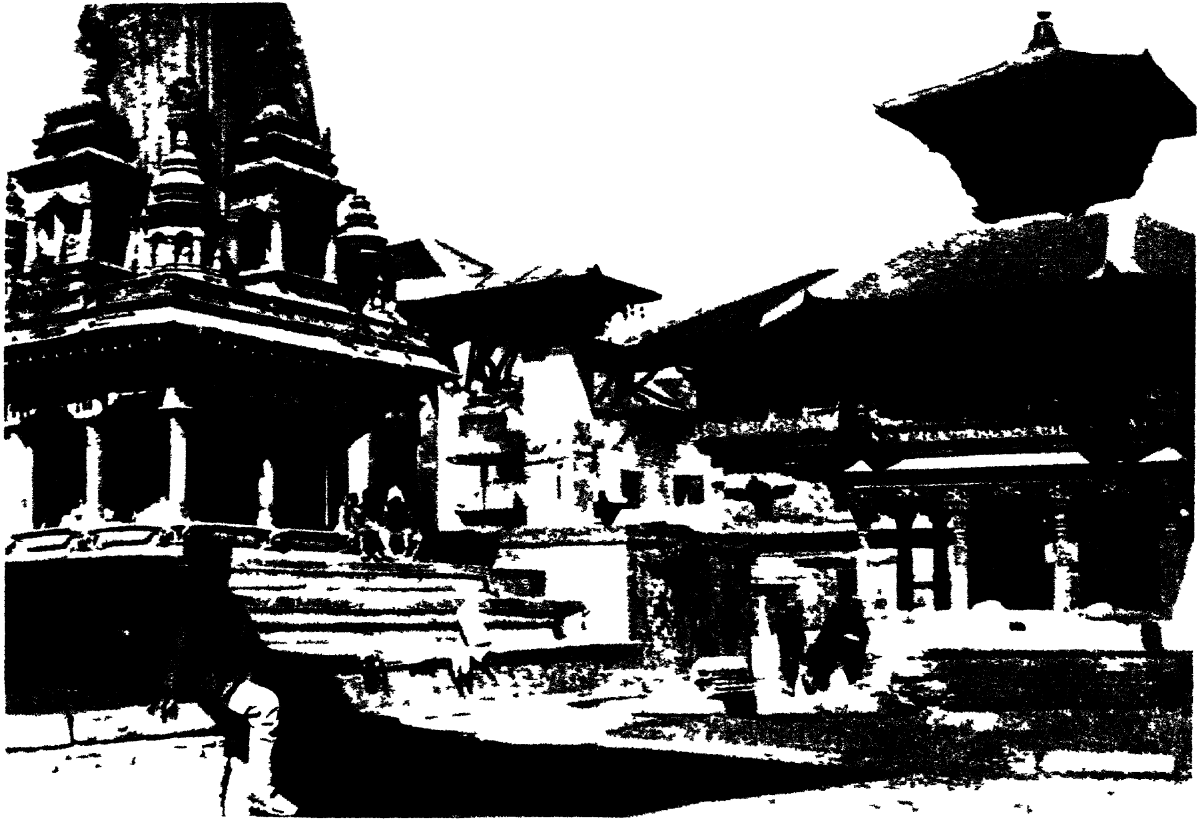


WINDOWS RICHLY ORNAMENTED WITH CARVED WOODWORK IN THE COURTYARD OF THE TEMPLE OF CHANGU NARAIN

later, owing to a disagreement over the frontier policy of the Gurkhas, war was declared by the British, and two campaigns followed. At first fortune favoured the hillmen, but subsequently under General Ochterlony a decisive battle was fought, and in 1816 the Nepalese sued for peace. A treaty was concluded, and since that date Nepal has been under the protection of the British Government.

The annals of the country as an Independent State of India have been somewhat uneventful. The Gurkha raja, Girvena Yuddha Vikrama, who was responsible for the war, died shortly after the treaty, and his place was taken by his infant son, Rajendra Vikrama Sah. During his minority the reins of the Government were held by a powerful minister named General Bhimsena Thapa. At this time the court resolved itself into the two rival factions of the Thapas and the Panres, and the remaining years are a record of struggles between these parties for supremacy. Bhimsena, however, was a wise and popular regent; but after having been over twenty years in power, through a variety of circumstances, he was

removed from his high position and died in 1839. It will be noticed that after the régime of this administrator the active agents of the State have been a succession of leading officials of the Government—who occupy the position of Prime Ministers. These individuals—and especially one of them—have been mainly responsible for the subsequent policy of the State. The successor of Bhimsena was his nephew, Matabar Singh. During his ministry a young soldier of the name of Jung Bahadur rose rapidly in the army and also in favour at the court. He was a nephew of Matabar Singh, and in the course of time gained sufficient power to enable him to dispose of his uncle, and ultimately to occupy his position as head of the Government. There is little doubt that Jung Bahadur is the most remarkable individual the State has ever produced. For over thirty years—from 1846, when he became Prime Minister, until he died in 1877—he was in every sense "the special head of all the land." The life of Jung Bahadur was full of incident, and he proclaimed his strong personality in every action. Added to this, legends



and traditions are already gathering around his memory, and there is every indication that he will be regarded by posterity as the "Rustum" of the nineteenth century. His attitude during the mutiny of the native troops in Hindustan was characteristic of the man. When the news reached Nepal, in spite of great opposition, he stood firm as a friend of the British. He at once sent off four thousand troops, and some time afterwards Jung himself followed with a much larger force, including artillerymen and guns. These rendered good service against the mutineers, and the State was rewarded for this action with, besides other substantial honours, a large portion of the Terai being restored to Nepal.

From this time the history of the country has been a record of prosperity, and of continued friendly relations with the British Government. Rajendra Vikrama was deposed in 1847, and the heir-apparent, Surendra Vikrama Sah, mounted the throne. During the reign of this king the great Jung Bahadur passed away in 1878, and his place as Prime

Minister was taken by his brother, Ranoddipa Sinha. In 1881 Raja Surendra Vikrama died after thirty-four years as ruler of the State, but in the active administration of which he took no great personal part, leaving this to his ministers. His son, Raja Prithivi Vira Vikrama Sah, born in 1875, then mounted the throne, and is king of Nepal at the present day.

There have been some changes in the ministry during this reign. Ranoddipa Sinha was assassinated in 1885, and Bir Sham Sher Jang Rana Bahadur, a nephew of Jung Bahadur, became Prime Minister. His tenure of this office was marked by a sound policy and many progressive measures, but he died suddenly in 1901. This important position was then taken by his brother, Maharaja Chander Sham Sher Jang Rana Bahadur, who is the present able Prime Minister of the State.

CHAPTER III

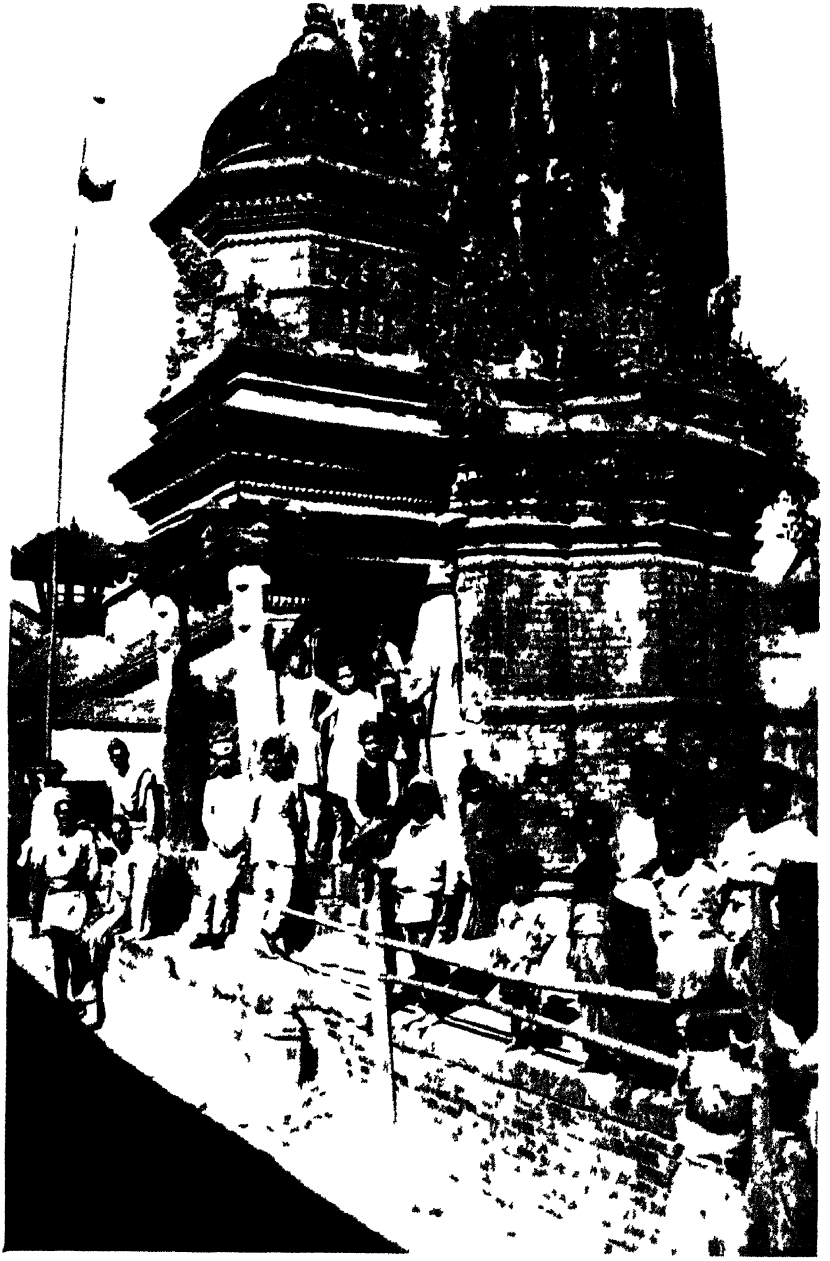
THE PEOPLE

The Different Tribes in Nepal—The Gurkhas and the Newars—The Religions of Nepal—Religious Influence on the Art of the State—Tantrism.

In the previous chapter the history of Nepal has been briefly outlined, being mainly a record of its kings and their general character as rulers. But for a true picture of any country it is necessary to look into the lives of the people, to know their origin, religion, customs, conditions of living, and social environment. This is specially so when the æsthetic expression of any community is under consideration. Art reflects the spirit and temperament of the people. The deepest feelings of all classes are revealed in their artistic aspirations. The character of the Egyptian people of ten thousand years ago is

plainly depicted on their tombs. At a later date the triumphal arches of the Romans mirror the ambitions of the classic citizen. Can we not see the rugged disposition of the inhabitants of Western Europe in the stern but picturesque buildings of the Gothic style? And so with the State of Nepal. The story of the people, and all that is profound in their nature, is illustrated in the temples and shrines of the valley. A short account of the population of Nepal, and the influences to which they have been subjected, seems necessary before their picturesque circumstances, and particularly the full meaning of the artistic conditions of their environment, can be properly realized.

The people of Nepal resolve themselves into so many different tribes that any broad classification appears at first sight a somewhat difficult matter. The most important of these are Gurkhas, Newars, Magars, Gurungs, Limbus, Kiratis, Bhotiyas, and Lepchas. As a result of this mixed population, the State vies with the Tower of Babel in its confusion of tongues, as at least six



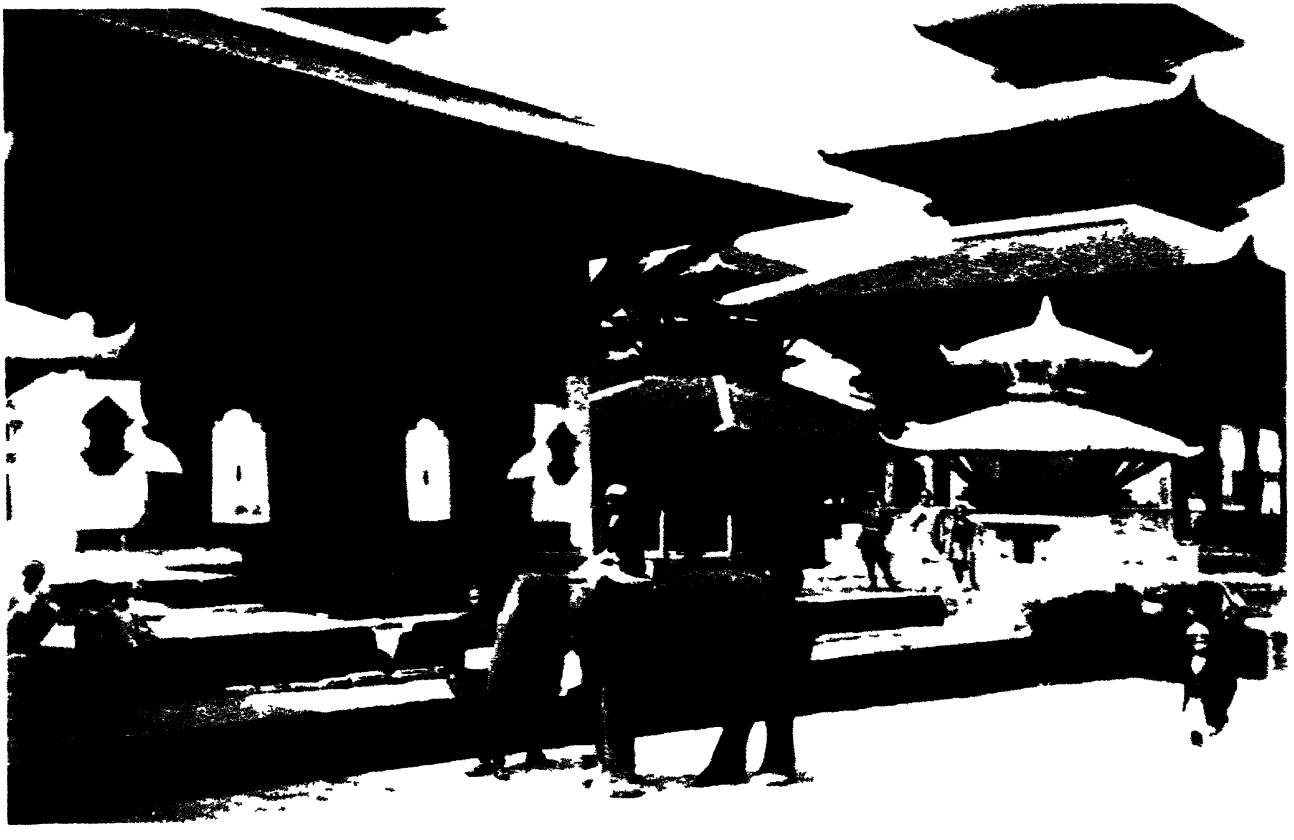
HATH TAILAN NA SHINE AT THAT AON

distinct languages are spoken within its small area. These range from Sanskrit, "the speech of the gods," to the gibberish of the jungle dwellers. Brian Hodgson, who spent many years in Nepal, has compiled several scholarly works on the ethnology of the Nepalese, including investigations into some of the small savage tribes living in the depths of the Terai. In connection with this research it is recorded that he approached the State authorities with a view to securing one of these wild aborigines for the purposes of an interview. His request was courteously acceded to, and a short time after the individual was solemnly produced—in a cage.

For all ordinary needs it may suffice to refer to the two principal races of the State. These are the Gurkhas and the Newars, the rulers and their subjects, the victors and the vanquished. The original inhabitants of the valley are the Newars, while the present ruling race are the Gurkhas, who conquered the country in 1768. For a sound and sympathetic administration and an ideal system of military organization the methods of the

latter must be studied, but for the arts and industries, the architecture of the houses and temples, for all that is picturesque and historic in the valley, the present generation is indebted to the Newars.

The origin of the Newars has been a matter of considerable speculation. Certain authorities have stated that they came into Nepal in the eleventh century A.D., from southern India, in the train of a Karnatic king. This theory has, however, been exploded by the deductions of subsequent students of Indian ethnology. It is now conclusively demonstrated that they emigrated from Tibet and its vicinity, and settled down in Nepal when the world was in its making. This is supported by their cast of features, their character, their customs, and their language, all of which point to their Mongolian extraction. Centuries of intermarriage with other tribes from an Indian stock have reduced the strong traces of their origin, but a careful sifting of facts and records has proved that the Newars are the aborigines of Nepal. They constitute the largest section of its inhabitants, and form the bulk of the



population of the ancient capitals of Patan and Bhatgaon. As carpenters, masons, metal-workers, and painters, they are ingenious and skilful, and the strikingly picturesque appearance of old Nepal is largely due to the æsthetic temperament of the Newars. In two particular branches of artistic embellishment these people excel—in the decorative treatment of their houses and palaces, and the enrichment of their temples and shrines. The streets and squares of Patan and Bhatgaon bear eloquent testimony to their success with the former, while the riot of carved wood and embossed metal on the sacred buildings in all parts of the valley is one of the most instructive features of the State. It is hardly necessary to add that this great field of artistic expression is so closely associated with the religion of the country, and so imbued with its symbolism, that to understand it some reference to the cult of those responsible for its production seems essential.

The religious history of Nepal may be best observed by a comparison with the course of religion in India. It is a story mainly of

contrasts. India commenced with Brahmanism and then became Buddhist. It reverted to Brahmanism, and then was forced into Mohammedanism. Nepal began in the same way, being first Brahmanistic, and was subsequently gathered, with India, into the fold of Buddhism. At this point the analogy ceases. India eventually rejected Buddhism, and would have none of it. Nepal compromised, combined the two cults, and in the broad sense Brahmo-Buddhism is the religion of the State to the present day. But the most striking difference between the two countries is, that whereas the one was overwhelmed by the great wave of Mohammedanism which swept the peninsula from end to end in the twelfth and following centuries, Nepal was never affected by this great political cataclysm. The storm, raging in the plains of India, was spent ere it reached the natural ramparts of Nepal, and only distant echoes of the Islamic turmoil reached the seclusion of the valley.

The realization of this gives the country an added interest. Nepal illustrates, as approximately as time and ordinary circum-

stances permit, the state of India before Islam had imprinted its indelible mark on almost every aspect of its life. The manners and customs of the people, their religion, arts and industries, the towns and the country, are practically the same as they were ten centuries ago. Unaffected by any foreign influences, undisturbed by the transitions which have taken place in the outer world, Nepal, protected by its natural position, presents an ideal picture of the Middle Ages—the Middle Ages of the East.

The story of Nepal is therefore the story of the Newars, and these people have written it profusely on every building of any importance in the valley. Apart from the ancient Sanskrit inscriptions with which the country abounds, it is, in its pictorial form, cut in stone or carved in wood, embossed in brass or cast in bronze, painted on plaster or moulded in terra-cotta, on a thousand and one shrines within the borders of the State. But even with this wealth of material the story is not easy to read, and needs some explanation.

The national religion of the Newars is

Buddhism, and has been so since the cult was first introduced into Nepal, two thousand years ago. But the Newar, like his cousin in the plains of India, found this simple faith unsatisfactory, and yearned for the elaborate ritual and picturesque practices which delight the heart and stimulate the mind of the Hindu worshipper of Vishnu or Shiva. And so, as time went on, the preachings of the Great Teacher gradually drifted into oblivion, and the Newars began to adopt one by one the rites and ceremonies, and even the social distinctions, of the Brahmans. The high standard of doctrine and discipline which marked the character of the Primitive Buddhist Church in the early history of the State has become modified, and Buddhism as maintained in Nepal has now accepted many of the popular features of Hinduism. The Buddhism of Nepal follows what is known as the *Theistic* system, which teaches that one universal, all-powerful, and immaterial Spirit has existed from before the commencement of time, and that it will pervade the universe throughout all eternity. This Spirit is God. He is

possessed of supreme power, and is endowed with supreme intelligence. He remains, has remained, and ever will remain, in a state of perfect repose. On the other hand, the basis of Hinduism is the same idea of one impersonal and spiritual Being, but this Being has come to be represented by several personal manifestations. Some of these incarnations have been accepted by the Buddhist Newars and incorporated into their own creed. Much of the complicated mythology, and many of the fantastic deities, of the Hindus have been absorbed into the Newars' "New Theology," and thus their Buddhism has lost much of the chaste and simple character for which it was originally noted. In this way it has come about that in Nepal Hindu shrines have been erected within the precincts of Buddhist monasteries and Buddhist temples are decorated with figures of Hindu gods, Hindu saints, and Hindu symbols. A religious building in Nepal will therefore often display a figure of the Buddha, calm, dignified, and reposeful, with all the attributes of his simple teaching around, while in close proximity is placed a

many-armed and many-headed apparition, symbolizing all that is restless and terrible in a faith which rules by fear.

All this may be read in the religious art of the Newars—and their buildings palpitate with emblems of the two creeds—the Restful and the Restless. But interwoven with these is a third form of worship—a mysterious and obscure belief, signs of which are discernible throughout the art of the land, but the actual ritual is fortunately veiled from the eyes of all but the initiated. Peering from under the broad eaves of the temples in the form of wood-carving, leering in lurid colours from the red walls of the shrines, fitted in skilfully so as not to really obtrude, but cunningly represented in many of the architectural efforts of the Newars, the Tantric element of Nepal Buddhism holds its unhallowed sway. Who and what are the devotees to the Tantric system, which has been described as a "diseased excrescence borrowed from the Hindus and based upon the worst part of Sivaism," is never divulged, but that it has a firm hold on a large community is proved by the frequency with

which its various aspects are pictorially expressed. "Love profane and love divine" seems to be the main underlying principle of Tantrism, but its esoteric nature has fortunately prevented its gross tenets from becoming generally known. The outward forms of it, however, occupy an important position in the illustrated story of the Newars, and reflect a peculiarly coloured sidelight on the character of these interesting people.

As the Newars constitute the artistic element of the State, so the Gurkhas comprise the dominant and warlike section of this combined community. The Rajput origin of the rulers has already been alluded to, and it follows from this that they favour Hindu observances. In appearance they retain traces of their noble descent in face and figure, although they have lost this largely by intermarriage with other races. They are devoted to a military life, and the bulk of the Gurkhas are by instinct soldiers. In this capacity they hold a high place, and are regarded by many leading authorities as the best fighting material in India. The State itself has a standing army

of at least 20,000 men, which is well equipped and regularly drilled.

There is one conflicting trait in the character of the Gurkhas which it is a little difficult to understand. It is usual to find, combined with the keen fighting disposition, a natural desire for athletics or any out-of-door sports requiring vigour and strength. In no sense is this observable in the Gurkha, except that he is passionately devoted to "Shikar," and the chase. But European games which have "caught on," so to speak, with such amazing rapidity in even the most distant parts of India, seem to have little attraction for the Nepalese. Katmandu boasts a magnificent *maidan*, which in almost any other part of the world would, on every occasion, be freely utilized for either indigenous or exotic athletics, but it is usually deserted, except during the times of parades. Probably the explanation may be found in this last fact, that the Gurkha is essentially a specialist. For these military manœuvres are frequent and serious, and indicate that in one grim sport at least the Gurkha excels—

"War, that mad game the world so loves to play."



IN THE DURBAR SQUARE AT BHATGAON *Page 71*

The figure of King Bhupatindra Malla faces the golden gate way of the Durbar Hall

CHAPTER IV

THE HIGH ROAD TO KATMANDU

The Snowy Range of the Himalayas—Through the Plains—The Terai—The Road in the River-bed—Churia Rest-house—Fishing—The Pass of Sisagarhi—The Pass of Chandragiri—First View of the Valley of Nepal—The Last Stage.

THE train pulls up at the small station of Raxaul. Near the booking office an elephant fidgets first on one leg, then on another, restlessly waving its trunk and jostling heedlessly a diminutive pack-pony grazing by its side. The passengers file out of the station; one, cleverly mounting the elephant by its tail, opens his Fox's paragon-frame umbrella, and all disappear towards the golden sunset, into a background of purple and green. By this and other tokens we realize that the limit of transport by modern western methods has been reached, and that onward India, in its

most primitive form, will minister to our needs.

Morning dawns on the water-logged rice fields of Behar, but, raising our eyes from the endless acres of swamp, they linger for a moment on the rampart of forbidding mountains, and then, above these, hanging like a delicate border of creamy-white lace, the range of eternal snows leaps into view.

> "Far in the North, like a vision of sorrow,
> Rise the white snowdrifts."

So sings the poet, but in our case the sensation is the reverse, as nothing could be more exhilarating after a prolonged sojourn in the low-lying country of Bengal than the first view of this ice-bound region. Extending from extreme east to west of the horizon, as the sun mounts higher the many miles of snow-capped peaks scintillate under its rays; from the low level of the plains the height and dignity of this great white barrier, when in sight, appears even more stupendous than from a nearer elevation. And there, far away in the eastern flank, is one small peak almost



COPPER GILT FIGURE OF ŚAKYA AT SHAMBU NĀTH

melting into the haze of the vast distance, the icy apex of Mount Everest itself, in a straight line nearly 200 miles away, but distinctly visible in the clear morning atmosphere. And, between the low-lying rice fields, nearly at sea-level, and the towering 29,000 feet of that distant peak, lies embosomed the country of Nepal.

It is 75 miles from Raxaul to Katmandu, and, regarded dispassionately, it seems no exaggeration to describe at least 60 miles of this journey as a materialized nightmare. The first few miles is that common dream of walking along a well-made road and being suddenly confronted by a great section cut out of it, the gap going down into nothingness, over which one sways and shudders. In the case of the high road to Nepal the bottom of the cutting is a river, which, discharging from the saturated rice fields has playfully gouged a channel for itself out of the thoroughfare. These interruptions occur at frequent intervals, and to negotiate them a detour into the adjoining crops is necessary. It had been casually communicated to us that the road

annually contested with a mountain torrent for the right of way, and, after 20 miles of the foregoing, when the village of Bichako is reached, what may be called the "river nightmare" commences. This is the dream of being a small human speck in a vast landscape of boulders. Minimized to the size of an ant, mile after mile you struggle, the reflected heat from every stone stinging like a whip, and, hours having passed, you raise your tired eyes to look around, and there are the same boulders before you, behind you, and on each side of you, seeming to return your scowl with a bland and serene expression. And so you pass through all the stages of a dreadful night, endless broken steps up which you toil and pant, only to have to plunge down monotonous miles of rock-cut ledges, being denied even that questionable pleasure, known only in the dream-world, of the flying sensation, as every foot of the way has to be exhaustively toiled. But to turn from the visionary to the stern reality.

The road to Katmandu is an extremely rough and varied one, boring its way like a

badly formed corkscrew through the two ramparts of mountains which intervene between the railway terminus at Raxaul and the valley of Nepal. In these circumstances the means of progression may be defined as the "go as you please" order, because before the end is reached, most known methods of locomotion, and several unknown ones, will have been called into requisition. Usually an elephant, two horses, several kinds of palanquin, and one's own feet, are all utilized. The first stage is ordinarily performed in a palanquin, although when the road has been badly breached by rains an elephant is often useful.

In the mysterious light of the false dawn we leave the bungalow at Raxaul in order to accomplish the 27 miles between this and the first halting-place at Churia. The scenery at first is the ordinary plains-land of India, through which the road in the form of an embankment drives a straight way. Breaks in this embankment are frequent, owing to the softness of the materials used, and the force of the rains. Several streams have to be forded. The atmosphere in the late autumn

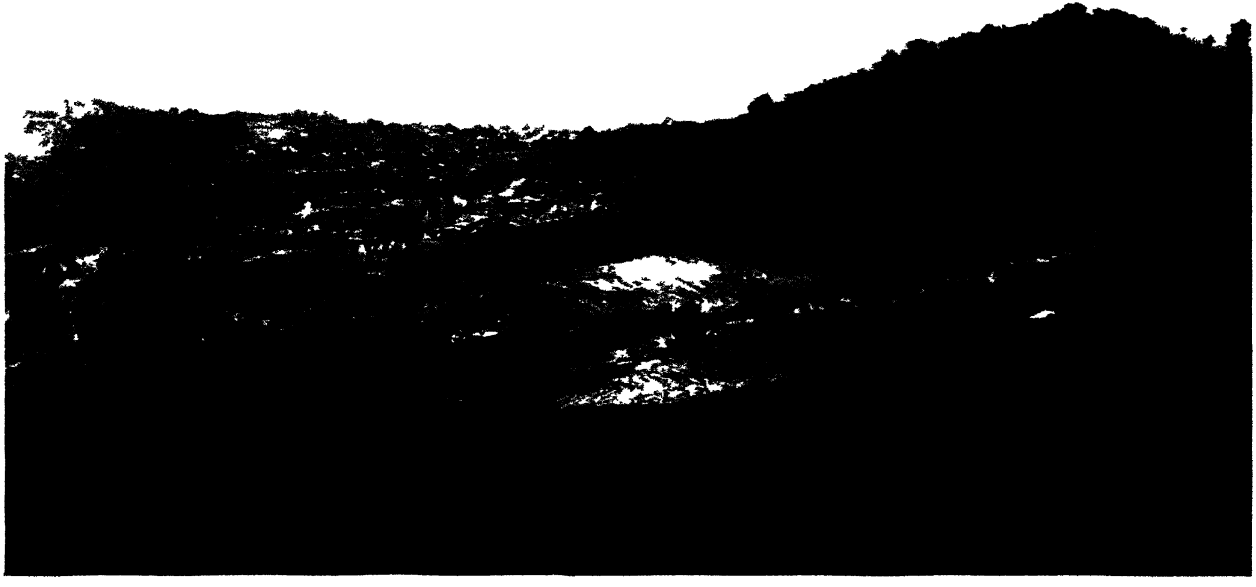
is balmy and pleasant. Everything is conducive to drowsiness. Lying full length in palanquin or "dooly," the gentle motion caused by the bearers, the soft patter of their bare feet as they shuffle along, their steady grunting chorus, the song of birds, the hum of insects, the slowly moving landscape, all combine to produce a feeling of complete rest to both mind and body which must be experienced to be appreciated. And so the miles gradually and serenely pass until a break occurs—truly a break—for one of the palanquin poles, which has evidently been rotting in idleness during the rains, shows distinct signs of giving way. In most circumstances and climates this typical act of irresponsibility might have led to "a tide of fierce invective," but already the lotus-eating atmosphere has stealthily drawn us under its spell, and, "lost to the hurrying world," we placidly wait while an expedition is planned and carried out to a distant clump of bamboos—waving in the wind like monster ostrich plumes—and the broken pole replaced. A few miles more through fields of shimmering crops, and then, with an almost dramatic



THE FIRST VIEW OF THE NEPAL VALLEY FROM THE CHANDRAGIRI PASS.—*Page* 57.

suddenness, the road closes in, the open landscape disappears, the sky is shut out by overhanging trees, the balmy breeze changes into a hot oppressive stillness, and a strange heavy feeling seems to come over all. We have entered the forest of the far-famed Terai. The mention of this region conjures up from the shades of the past the holy spirit of Gautama Buddha, Nana Sahib of execrated memory, and the spectre of that mighty hunter, Jung Bahadur, with an accompaniment of tigers, rogue elephants, and malaria; and all around jungle —deep impenetrable jungle. In the neighbourhood of the high road, however, the general appearance of the Terai is somewhat commonplace, being composed of low trees and thick scrub, and, mainly owing to the traffic which is constantly moving to and fro, game, both large and small, has been driven into the denser parts of the forest. But this thick belt of jungle represents the first line of natural outworks, averaging in depth about twenty miles, which defends Nepal along the main part of its southern border. And the great natural feature of this defence is the extremely

unhealthy character of this tract of country, due to the prevalence, from March to November, of a deadly form of malarial fever, known locally as the "awal." Years ago it was considered almost madness to attempt to travel through the Terai except during the cooler months of the year, but it is doubtful whether the actual high road quite deserves this sinister reputation. Nevertheless the stifling and unwholesome atmosphere which seems to extend throughout this portion of the marsh indicates conditions which cannot be conducive to good health. Very creditable efforts have been made to reduce the discomforts of the heat during this stage of the journey, and the wants of the thirsty man and beast are attended to in a very inviting manner. At distances of every few miles well-made drinking fountains have been constructed, and here the gasping palky-bearer or exhausted pack-animal is refreshed by a plentiful supply of pure water conveyed by pipes from the mountains. This conduit was provided by one of the ladies of the Royal house of Nepal, who, struck by the misery she saw while



GENERAL VIEW OF THE NEPAL VALLEY, SHOWING THE EFFECTS OF EROSION *Page* 58

travelling on this route, ordered it to be built and maintained at her own expense. Each fountain is in the form of an ornamental pillar, on each side of which is a representation of the donor's hand holding a spout, from which a continuous stream of water flows into a tank.

Twenty miles from Raxaul, and after about ten miles of the Terai, the road debouches on to the village of Bichako, which heralds a further change of scene. From here the track boldly plunges into the wide dry bed of the stream known as Bichaliola Naddi, and utilizes this rough but convenient watercourse as a highway for seven miles until Churia is reached. This is an extremely trying part of the journey, and at an average rate of a mile an hour the caravan scrambles over boulders, fords, streams, and skirts great fallen trees, in its painful progress. Darkness soon set in, and it seemed a never-ending phantasmagoria of large loose stones, huge dead trees apparently purposely arranged as obstacles, and foaming torrents, some of which almost swept the party off its feet. Not a vestige of a path revealed itself, and in places the fallen branches of " the old

and ponderous trunks of prostrate trees," like bone-white skinny arms, appeared to slither out from the night with the set object of preventing the advance. One of the bearers, stung by a scorpion, and another afflicted with some other complaint—or it might have been mere sympathy for his companion in misfortune—hobbled along, rending the night air with their wild and dismal lamentations. The leading group of coolies, stepping into the darkness, dropped with considerable noise and objurgation into a deep cutting, but with more damage to nerves than limbs, as fortunately the stream, which had humorously constructed this pitfall across the route, thought fit to deposit a comparatively soft bed of sand and gravel before chuckling itself dry over the practical joke. At another place, in the utter blackness of the night, while attempting to negotiate a curiously shaped boulder, this obstacle made some slight movement, revealing a derelict bullock, deserted by its owner and left in this wilderness of stones to die. And so stumbling on, every few yards the pace becoming slower and slower, the lights of

Churia rest-house eventually came into view. The midnight meal, which succeeded this long march, was enlivened by blood-curdling stories from the lips of the cook, who, round-eyed with terror, had been awaiting our arrival for some days at this bungalow in the depths of the forest. From the city of Calcutta, where his uneventful life had been passed, into the wilds of the Nepal jungle, was a considerable change for this simple town-bred soul, and the old residential watchman of the rest-house had lost no opportunity of working on his receptive feelings, which had also been well wrought up by sympathetic friends previous to setting out from his ancestral bazaar. In anticipation of the monsters supposed to be lying in wait for him, he had armed himself with a most formidable spear, the head of which had evidently belonged to an antique lance—undoubtedly a weapon of many histories. Originally the property of a swash-buckling Indian cavalryman of a century ago, it now shook in the nervous hand of this unheroic domestic, whose stated intention was to utilize it in warding off the anticipated attack

of an infuriated man-eating tiger, or stopping the charge of a wild elephant. As he recounted the long list of thrilling adventures which he had diplomatically avoided by locking himself in the cook-house for the whole of the time, his terrified looks were an assurance that neither friend nor foe was in any danger from its rusty point. In his imaginings this individual was not far removed from a servant of another time and place who, finding himself in a somewhat similar situation, had occasion to communicate with the writer on a business matter. His epistle was elegantly rounded off by a somewhat gratuitous discourse on the fauna of the district, with a view no doubt to exciting his master's compassion, and concluding with the statement that the country " abounded in wild beasts such as monkeys, jackals, hares, dears (*sic*), and other bloody animals."

From Churia a further stretch of the highway continues along another stony river-bed until, after seven miles, Hatawa is reached. This village is in the heart of the best sporting country, and is usually the starting-point for " shikar " expeditions. Ordinarily it is a

squalid collection of huts, but becomes a bustling centre of life when, as in the days of the great Jung Bahadur, it was made the rendezvous for a tiger, rhino, or elephant hunt. Near by, rippling over a rocky bed, is the Rapti River, and three miles farther on, where it is joined by the Samri, is a useful suspension bridge.

Here, close to the village of Separi Tar, the sporting appearance of the river, which was of a nature to harbour mahseer or snow-trout of a good size, tempted one to fish the waters with a spoon-bait and other lures. But in spite of every endeavour the result of many hours' desperate labour was but the solace—

> "With patient heart
> To sit alone, and hope and wait,
> Nor strive in any wise with fate,"

when a cheery Nepali officer riding by dismounted and commenced a conversation. After the usual salutations and conventionalities, the subject of sport was broached, and eventually the prospects of fishing in Nepal. He assured us that there were fish to be caught, and that in several places he had

been most successful, having landed many large mahseer with but little trouble. We listened with keen interest, for here was the local knowledge and experience which no sportsman, whether after fin, fur, or feather, can afford to disregard. Cautiously the question was put, knowing that often these matters are jealously guarded secrets, but "what bait did our friend use with such glorious results?" And the reply came with the innocent smile of a child, "Dynamite." Sadly, but firmly, the fishing paraphernalia was packed up, and our journey continued, with the feeling that the deadliest of spoons could never compete with the cataclysmic "baits" of this Nepali Isaac Walton.

From this point a very picturesque march of about twelve miles along a river gorge brings the traveller to Dokkaphedi, where a fresh phase of the journey commences. This is the ascent leading to the first of two steep passes which are the natural ramparts guarding the approach to the Valley of Nepal. Crossing a hot and glaring river-bed at Bhimpedi—one mile from Dokkaphedi — a steep and

strenuous climb of 2225 feet, up numberless dusty and unshaded "zigzags," ends at Sisagarhi. Here is a fort occupied by Nepali troops, and a sentry with a bayonet guards the narrowest part of the defile. On a clear day it is possible to trace in the far distance the general alignment of the road already traversed, and beyond this, lying under a blur of heat and haze, may be located the limitless plains of Hindustan. Northward can be defined here and there portions of the path yet to be accomplished, and particularly noticeable is the spiral track leading up the pass of Chandragiri—the second great natural rampart protecting the promised land beyond. From Sisagarhi there is a steady descent of several miles through beautiful country, the sides of the road gay with bushes of scented pink mimosa, and here and there groups of delicate hothouse begonias. This leads to a bridge across the Panoni River, and from thence a path brings the wayfarer by numberless fords, owing to the sinuous nature of the stream, to Marku. In any time of the year except the dry season the river road is im-

passable owing to the high water and strong current, so a detour has to be made over the mountain-side. This supplementary track rambles over the cliffs in a most reckless fashion, and if the traveller is overtaken by darkness before this long march is finished, he may have some adventures to chronicle before the welcome lights of Marku rest-house come into view.

Shortly after leaving this halting-place the road traverses the smiling vale of Chitlung, or, as it is sometimes called, Little Nepal. Rising from out of this, the traveller then commences on an arduous climb of 2000 feet, leading up to the Chandragiri Pass—the red zigzag scarring the green flank of which has been already observed from Sisagarhi. Near the top a splendid view of the country through which he has passed will lie at his feet, and the road can be traced, winding its way for miles, until it is lost behind the bluffs which hide Marku from sight. Chitlung below, its

> "Fair meadows, softly tinged
> With orange and with crimson,"



ENTRANCE TO THE TEMPLE OF GANESHTHAN, NEAR BHATGAON

looks a sweet haven of rest bathed in warm sunlight, in comparison with the rugged rock-strewn jungle through which the track drags its painful way. Nature, in her crudest form, is utilized not a little as engineer-in-chief in the construction of this part of the "Road,"—dried-up mountain torrents being once more the main feature of its alignment. This view is, however, only a preliminary to the still more glorious one which will reveal itself when the actual saddle of the pass is scaled, and a few yards of the descent on the other side are accomplished. Then suddenly, at a turn in the steep track, the foliage seems to part before the vision, and there, 2000 feet directly below, like a dream-picture lies the Valley of Nepal.

The constantly changing panorama spread out beneath is a magnificent one, a noble introduction to the land which has cost us so much labour to reach. Practically the whole of the accessible portion of Nepal is visible from here, and as the last monsoon clouds are wafted to and fro, great sections of "the infinite ramification of stream and valley"

appear, and then the vaporous curtain closes over, leaving us gazing at a white veil of mist. The snows and distant mountains are hidden behind a bank of lowering clouds, so that the landscape seems to continue indefinitely into the Beyond. Every now and again a stronger breeze tears great rifts in the moving mass of clouds, and expansive tracts of the sunlit opalescent country flash into view, with huge dark shadows charging over the green and gold, giving a glorious depth of light and shade to the whole scene. Glimpses of the three cities of the valley are permitted us at intervals—Katmandu, Patan, and Bhatgaon—each vignetted within its own diaphanous frame of mist, brown blots of innumerable roofs, Katmandu showing up most distinctly on account of the large white modern edifices which comprise its palaces and public buildings.

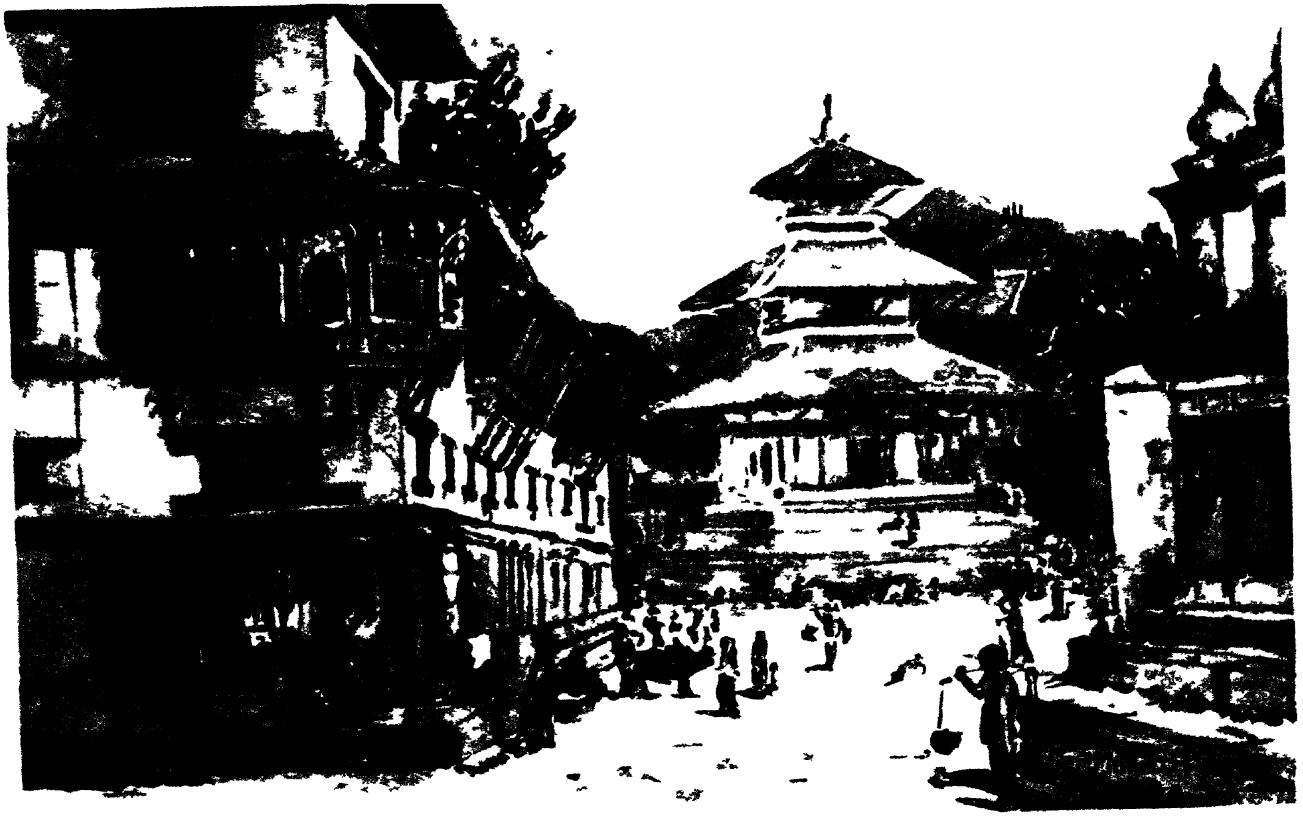
The drop down of 2000 feet from this point to the level of the valley is performed by a track, the gradient of which—if such it can be called—is simply terrific. It scrambles down the mountain-side and through a grand forest of trees like a sheer torrent of boulders

and rocks. Sections of this imperfectly trained landslip are rudely shaped into a semblance of steps, but the main part of it, for steepness and dissimilarity from anything within the ordinary category of a road, is ludicrous. Nevertheless, in its primeval grandeur, and primitive construction, this last stage leading into the heart of Nepal is most impressive, and although the view of the valley gradually dissolves as one progresses, the occasional miniature pictures of the tender distance framed by the heavy foliage form a beautiful contrast to the sombre savage "great world's altar stairs" down which we are plunging.

The inhabitants, however, of the valley and its neighbourhood seem to make light of this march, and a constant stream of them are to be met with, some of whom daily make the journey from Chitlung to Katmandu, or *vice versa*, in connection with their work. Most of them are heavily laden coolies, but there are also parties of women and girls, wearing diadems and tiaras of wild flowers, who climb with chamois spring up the rocky

passages, breaking the solemn silence of the forest with their songs, which echo in the distance with a long-drawn plaintive note like that of a lost Dryad. Bullocks and goats may be seen undertaking this route, and almost as if out of their element flounder from rock to rock, but rarely come to grief. A buffalo calf is being carried up in a basket on its owner's back, with the anxious mother blundering along in the rear. The little one seems quite self-possessed in its apparently uncomfortable position, with its head lolling over the shoulder of its human foster-father, and shows its affection by occasionally licking his ear.

From the foot of the descent there is one more phase of the journey. This consists of seven level miles across the plain to Katmandu, which lies towards the centre of the valley. Through an expanse of flat cultivated country the road winds, crossing by bridges the Kalimatti and Vishnumatti Rivers, until the capital of the State is reached. The high road to Katmandu is at an end.



CHAPTER V

THE CITIES OF THE VALLEY

Katmandu—Legendary Plan—History—The Durbar—Bhim Sen's Tower—Bhatgaon—The Durbar Square—The Golden Gate—Nyatpola Deval or the Temple of the Five Stages—The Taumari Tol—Patan—Its Decay—The Durbar Square—Principal Buildings of Patan—Kirtipur.

THE three main cities of Nepal are Katmandu, Bhatgaon, and Patan, all situated in the valley, and each within a few miles of one another. When the country consisted of several principalities, each of these was a capital in itself, self-governed and self-contained, but since the Gurkha conquest in 1767 Katmandu has been retained as the seat of the present Government of the State. Owing to this turn of events, the two ancient cities of Bhatgaon and Patan have fallen gradually into partial decay, but all these capitals, whether ancient or modern, are picturesque in the

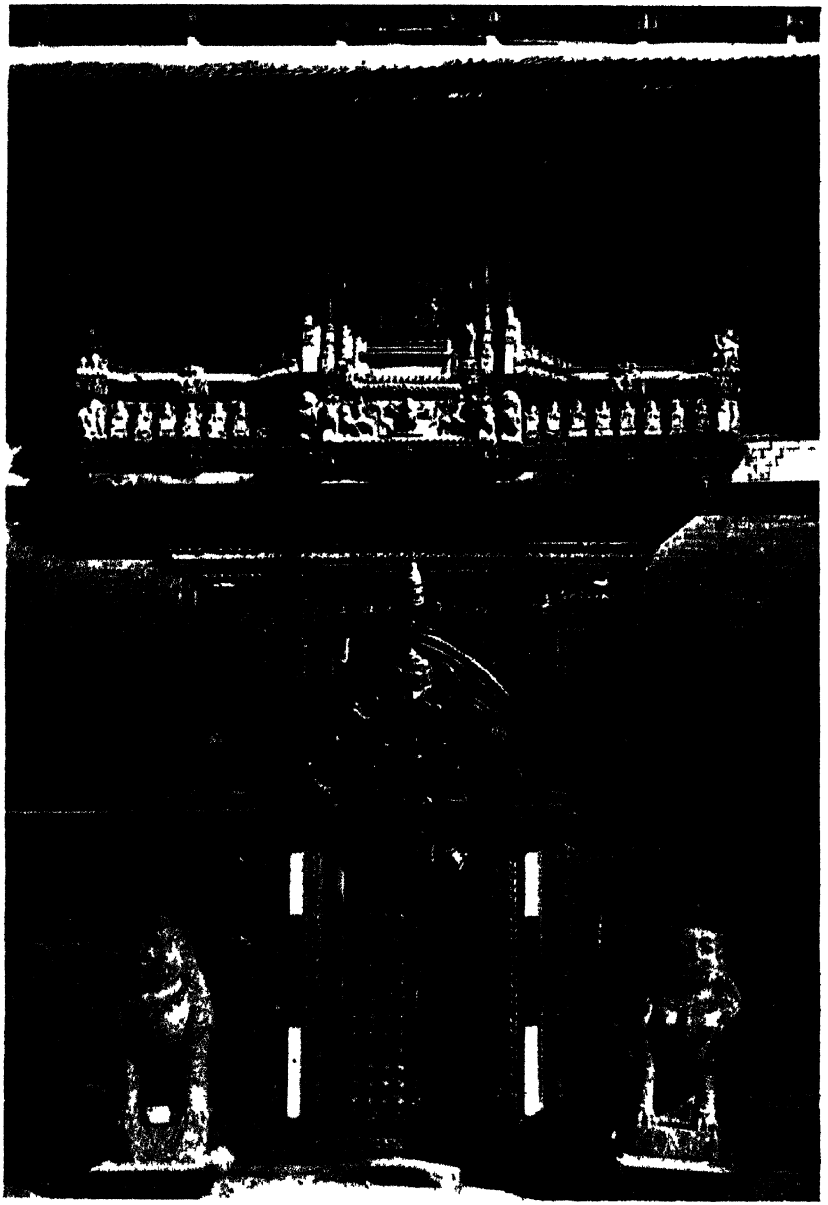
extreme, and full of artistic relics of a bygone age.

The immediate outskirts of Katmandu are somewhat dull and unimpressive, as this city is approached through long roads bounded by high walls—the confines of estates surrounding the palaces of various princes — but the monotony of this acts as a foil to the interesting character of the streets within. As one turns into the chief bazaar, it is soon realized that there is only one word to describe the city of Katmandu, and that is " picturesque." It is hardly artistic, as the best art and architecture are to be found at Bhatgaon and Patan, nor are its buildings, with one or two exceptions, anciently interesting, but on account of being the living capital of Nepal and bustling with brightly garbed people on business intent, it has an air and vitality of its own, which distinguishes it from its two sister cities of the past. An impressionistic picture of Katmandu is a medley of tumbled wood-carving—here and there painted in crude colours, mellowed by time into harmonious effects,—brass grotesques sprawling

over uneven pavements, quaint overshadowing roofs surmounting rich red brickwork walls, and ever and about a moving variegated crowd, the whole combination in its confusion of decoration, buildings, and people presenting a scene of unrivalled Orientalism —a piece of the medieval east itself. But a closer investigation indicates that this is but a screen to still more wonderful effects which lie behind these picturesque bazaars. For here and there, through carved and corrugated old archways, are glimpses of courtyards and shrines, containing idols smeared with vermilion and ghee, festooned with flowers, and framed with burnished brass ornament which rambles and riots over the temple fronts— " this way and that in many a wild festoon "— delightful conglomerations of bright colour, rich shadows, flickering sunlight, religious devotion and unmitigated dirt, the last not the least striking of them all.

The graphic imagination of the Newar has enabled him to see in the plan of each of these cities a religious symbol; Bhatgaon is said to resemble the conch or shell of Vishnu

Narayan, Patan being a round compact city is likened to the wheel or *chakra* of Buddha, while Katmandu is recorded to have been built in the shape of the sword of its great founder, Manjusri. There is also a Hindu legend that this was the scimitar which Devi carried in one of her many hands. The handle or blunt extremity of this traditionary weapon lies to the south, towards the confluence of the Baghmatti and Vishnumatti Rivers, while its apex points to the north, and terminates in the suburb of Timmale, which stretches round or rests upon it, according to the Buddhists, as the *chhattra* of cloth does upon the point of Manjusri's sword. The greatest length of the city of Katmandu from north to south is about a mile, and its breadth varies from one-fourth to one-third of a mile. The present population is 40,000 souls. Originally each city was surrounded by a wall, but these defences, being allowed to fall into decay, have almost entirely disappeared, together with many of the large gateways. The general plan of a Nepalese city consists of a number of features which custom has made common to



ENTRANCE TO THE DURBAR AT PATAN.

The projections at the sides of windows and doors are a characteristic feature of Newar architecture.

all the large towns of the State. In the centre is a large irregularly shaped public square, on one side of which is the royal palace or "durbar." The remaining sides of this open space are occupied with temples and shrines sacred to the locality. Irregularly distributed around the durbar square are various smaller squares (tols), containing less important buildings, and connected with one another, and also with the main square, by streets and lanes, while compassing the whole city was a wall pierced by several gateways.

History states that Katmandu was founded in 724 A.D., and near the durbar square is an ancient wooden building, from which the city is said to take its name. Externally it is a somewhat ramshackle erection, and the inside is dark and mysterious—"no light but rather a transpicuous gloom." It is used as a house of accommodation for travelling devotees, and was built in 1596 A.D. by the Raja Lachminna Sing Mal. The Newars still allude to this building as *Katmandu,* the legend being that the whole of it was constructed from the wood of one monster tree, hence the name,

kath being "wood," and *mandu* "edifice, house, or temple." Thus has been evolved its modern designation, but originally this city was called Manju Pattan after its founder, Manjusri.

The most attractive building in Katmandu is the durbar palace, the stately pagoda roofs of which rise high above the walls and subsidiary edifices with which it is surrounded. In design it is a confused labyrinth of quadrangles, passages, and chambers—"a mighty maze without a plan," and consists of a collection of forty or fifty courts of different sizes, each having a separate name. Oldfield remarks that these courts "communicate one with another by small doorways only, which can easily be secured, so that, in case of danger or disturbance, by closing them the inmates of the palace may shut themselves into the different parts of the building, and defend themselves with ease against a large number of assailants."

Close to this palace on the north is the royal temple of Taleju, the most notable of the temples and pagodas in the durbar square, and devoted entirely to the use of royalty. The

goddess Taleju, or Tulaja devi, is the protectress of the ruling family of Nepal, and it is related that Prithi Narain, the Gurkha conqueror of Katmandu, having offered a human sacrifice in this temple, was visited in a dream by this deity, who expressed her displeasure at the act.

Towards the centre of the city there arises, far above all other buildings, a stone tower or column, the most striking, but probably least interesting erection in Katmandu. It is about 200 feet high, and is a notable landmark from all parts of the valley. Built by the Gurkha General Bhim Sen, it was not raised for any particular purpose but merely as a freak, and has since been called Bhim Sen's folly. A legend, repeated with great solemnity with regard to this building, maintains that Jung Bahadur, the great hero of all the Gurkhas, for a wager jumped his horse from the top of the column to the pavement below, the animal being killed, but the reckless rider escaping unhurt. The true account of this act—for the tradition is based on an actual episode—states that during the course of construction

of this tower, and while it was far from reaching its present height, Jung out of bravado offered to jump with his horse from the unfinished top of the building to the ground. This he accomplished, but how much of the tower was really built at the time of this performance is left to the imagination of the breathless listener. Prosaic westerners have also recorded the fact that the pavement was heaped high with straw and similar materials, being specially prepared for the occasion, but the loyal Nepali still clings to the simple story that Jung, mounted on his charger, leapt from top to bottom, and his faith in this version remains unshaken.

About seven miles south-east of Katmandu is the city of Bhatgaon, one of the old Newar capitals of Nepal. From the distant hills it lies like a ruddy brown patch among the green rice fields, and from a height it is not difficult to trace a rough similarity in its general plan to the legendary conch-shell of Vishnu, which it is supposed to resemble.

The approach to Bhatgaon is like that of most Oriental cities, through dirty suburbs of

sordid streets and mean dwellings, with here and there a lattice window, carved doorway, or quaint hanging lamp, holding out a promise of better things. At a cross street a shrine comes into view, with crimson draperies, bright brass entrance, glittering metal pinnacle, painted woodwork, brackets of caryatid deities bristling with arms, and a large bronze bell supported by rampant dragons. This is the first introduction to the real Bhatgaon, the ancient seat of the Newar kings. From this one passes through winding streets of old wood and brick houses, each dwelling displaying some different form of ornate carving in window or doorway, and each placed at an apparently fortuitous angle. Gradually the buildings become larger and more important, and the decoration more profuse as the centre of the city is reached. Then a whole street of overhanging balconies and wooden colonnades comes into view, with doorways crowned by heavily carved tympanums of deities and devils, and lattice windows with peacocks cunningly carved posing in the centres, until we suddenly debouch into the durbar square

and are confronted with the culminating effect of the combined arts of the Newars, probably the most entrancingly picturesque city scene in Nepal. Around a rambling open space of flagged pavement, temples are irregularly grouped, most of them on terraced plinths, their pagoda roofs of red tiles and golden finials climbing into the blue sky. Some of these are approached by steep flights of steps, flanked by stone statues of humans in elaborate costumes, elephants, horses, and rhinos, gaily caparisoned and heavily chained to their pedestals, and monstrous fauna of the nether world. Truly the architect of these buildings felt that his creations were so fantastic that they did

> "need the guard
> Of dragon-watch with unenchanted eye."

Other edifices forming part of this scene are covered with a confusion of wood-carving picked out with colours or scintillating with brass incrustations. On a solid platform towards the centre of the square is a colossal bell, and overlooking this, on a high stone column surmounted by an immense lotus,

kneels a magnificent metal effigy of Raja Bhupatindra Mall, the greatest of the rulers of Bhatgaon. One of the finest conceptions of the Newar artist was that of erecting on a single column in front of the building, with which his name was principally associated, a statue in metal of the founder or benefactor posed in a solemn and dignified attitude, usually kneeling and with hands together as in prayer. Sometimes grouped around this individual, but all on the same pedestal, are placed smaller statues of his children, the whole being surmounted by a metal umbrella or a canopy of snakes. Many of these are to be seen in the city squares of Nepal, and probably one of the most beautiful and imposing is this of Raja Bhupatindra Mall. Crowning the graceful lotus pillar, the burnished gold figure looks down gravely on the finest building of his reign, the Durbar Hall of Bhatgaon. Immediately in front of the statue is the entrance to this edifice, a doorway of brick and embossed copper gilt, the richest piece of art work in the whole kingdom, and placed like a jewel flashing innumerable facets in the hand-

some setting of its surroundings. To adequately describe this feature, either from its artistic or religious aspects, is an impossibility, and no reproduction can give any idea of its gorgeous effect, owing to the brilliancy of the material in which it is executed. In the bright sunlight of the country, the burnished figures take on an added power, and by their great projection, reaching out from the composition, seem to sear themselves into the imagination. The crawling lizard of gilded bronze on the moulding palpitates like a living thing in the heat, and the many arms of the great god in the trefoil tympanum are full of a movement and action which seem real. But apart from this view of its magnificence, the religious meaning in the whole conception is stupendous. Complete volumes of Hindu and Buddhist thought are embodied in its design, and the meanest member of either of these faiths is able to read in almost any part of it some simple story that he can understand, or extract therefrom some attractive allegory which may stimulate his mind. The artist, whether of the east or west, who has



THE GOLDEN GATE OF THE DURBAR HALL AT BHATGAON.—*Page* 72

achieved this has not lived in vain, and the artificer of this wonderful doorway has proved in this great work that he was not only a past-master of his craft, but a high priest of his cult. There are many other beautiful and absorbing features on the various buildings in the durbar square of Bhatgaon, but this "Door of Gold" —molten, graven, hammered, and roll'd— forces these into comparative insignificance by its depth of meaning, richness of design, wealth of material, and the excellence of its workmanship. As a specimen of man's handicraft it creates a standard whereby may be measured the intellect, artistic and religious, of the old Newars.

Near the durbar hall, but in an adjacent square, is another very fine building, also the work of Raja Bhupatindra Mall. It is called the Nyatpola Deval, or the Temple of the Five Stages, and stands on five terraces penetrated by a fine flight of steps. Colossal figures, carved in stone, and picked out with brilliant colours, are on each side of this stairway, the lowest pair being statues of two historic giants—the Gog and Magog of

the Newars—really, two wrestlers in the service of the king, Jaya Mall and Phatta, and reported to have had the strength of ten ordinary men. Above these are two elephants with ten times the power of the foregoing, and on a stage higher in the same muscular proportion two lions, similarly two griffins, and at the top two deities, Singhini and Vyaghini, reputed the most powerful of all. Locally this temple is designated the "Bhairon," as, owing to these monstrous creatures occupying the most prominent position in its design, they are thought to be "Bhairavas" or "the Terribles." These are divinities of a secondary order in the Pantheon of the Newars, and are supposed to be the great enemies of the demons of evil, whom they trample under foot. In a sense they are the equivalents of St. George or St. Michael of Christendom. The temple itself, an ornate and imposing building erected on the uppermost of these stages, was originally intended to be a shrine for the occupation of a secret Tantric divinity, but at the present day it appears to be unoccupied. It is recorded

that at the time of the founding of this building in 1700 A.D., as an example to his subjects the king himself brought three bricks towards its erection, and this act so stimulated the citizens of Bhatgaon that in five days the whole of the materials for its construction were forthcoming.

On the opposite side of this square, which is called the Taumari Tol, is a very richly decorated temple, dedicated to Bhavani, having a shrine at the front guarded by two magnificent metal dragons of ferocious mien, and rendered more fierce by being touched up with vermilion. Great plates of brass, embossed with bold patterns centring around religious symbols, cover the brickwork, and on a lotus pillar on each side of the façade a gilt lion rampant supports a double flaming banner, the burnished gold of which flashes in the sunlight. Running around this building are fantastic mouldings, from which depend borders of strange beasts' heads, all picked out in the most gaudy colours, while the lattice windows instead of being made of wood are formed of strips of metal gilt. The shrine

itself, or at least the visible portion of it, which occupies the place of the door to the temple, is a conglomeration of metal work, but so obscured with thick grease, applied in the form of offerings by devotees, as to be almost indistinguishable. Children sprawl about its pedestal, and one small imp sits triumphantly astride one of the great dragons, whose expression almost seems to enter grimly into the humour of the situation. A pretty girl in brightly coloured robes, with marigolds in her hair, approaches the shrine carrying a brass tray with offerings. She scatters a few grains of rice on the thickly daubed door, touches her forehead, joins her hands together for one moment, and then, with a rapt expression on her face, moves away. One of the smallest of the children clinging to the dragon, falls, and commences to cry. She comforts it by giving it a flower from her hair. A grey hen with several chicks fusses into the shrine, and speedily pecks up the offering of rice.

Of these cities of the valley, Patan is the one which principally proclaims the melancholy



ENTRANCE TO THE BHAVANI TEMPLE AT BHATGAON (p. 77)

fact that its "glory has departed." There is much that is left in the squares and streets of this ancient capital which still preserves its original beauty, but at the same time it carries the air of a city whose prosperity is a thing of the past. Situated about two miles to the south-east of Katmandu, in size it is still the largest of the towns of Nepal, but is only a ghost of its former self when it was a wealthy, powerful, and important place, the residence of one of the Newar kings. For now Patan "sleeps in the dust," and although boasting of 20,000 inhabitants, there is none of the bustle, activity, and opulence which are visible throughout Katmandu and Bhatgaon. It is "a city of conquered Newars and vanquished Buddhism." In 1768 Patan surrendered to the Gurkhas, and like Babylon

> "set wide her two-leav'd brass
> To let the military deluge pass,"

and the city was given up to plunder. History relates that this was accompanied by great barbarities, the nobility and principal families being put to the sword, while the unfortunate

population, "being mostly Buddhists, received but little mercy at the hands of their Hindu conquerors. The royal palace was dismantled; the dwellings of the wealthy citizens were robbed of everything valuable that they contained, and even the temples were not spared." And Patan has never recovered from this dreadful blow, which still appears imprinted on the visages of its people as on the façades of its buildings. Time also has assisted in this ruin, and laid its hand heavily on much of the architecture of this city, so that deserted shrines, broken archways, mutilated sculptures, and relics overgrown by rank vegetation greet the eye at every turn. Hodgson himself states that "it is often requisite to walk heedfully over the classic fields of the valley of Nepal, lest perchance you break your shins against an image of a Buddha." But the great central square with its public buildings and temples still bravely stands, and endeavours to give the lie to those who maintain that she is utterly cast down. Sylvain Levi's recent observations on this portion of Patan are graphic and interesting: "La place

du darbar est une merveille qui défie la description ; sous la vive clarté d'un ciel qui n'éblouit pas, le palais royal étale sa façade ouvragée, sculptée, bariolée à plaisir, où les ors, les bleus, les rouges éclairent le ton sombre des boiseries ; vis-à-vis, comme enfanté par un caprice d'artiste, un monde de pierre rayonnant de blancheur, piliers que couronnent des images de bronze, colonnades ajourées temples de rêves, légers et frêles, sous la garde d'une armée de chimêres et de griffons."

Seen from any point of view this aspect of Patan is most picturesque, and when it is realized that the background to this scene is bold mountains and snowclad peaks, the beauty of the *tout ensemble* can be imagined. From this central square narrow alleys radiate in all directions, and these lead to shrines, temples, and pagodas in endless succession. In the narrowest of lanes some of the most remarkable buildings are to be found, one temple standing in a particularly unsavoury gully, attracting attention on account of being plated from pavement to pinnacle with sheets of embossed copper gilt. Near this, and

almost blocking up the passage, is a shrine to Ganesh, with the attributes of this popular divinity in the shape of two colossal bronze rats crouching on pedestals in front. Many of these religious edifices are entered from mean and dirty thoroughfares, through gloomy portals leading into great courtyards, which are museums of artistic and religious symbolism in every conceivable material. Massive metal "overdoors" are clamped above the entrance of every shrine, with the divinity to whom the building is dedicated spiritedly embossed in the centre. Above this figure, and protecting it with outstretched wings, is usually a fearsome *garuda*, part bird, part human, part beast, while projecting from each side is a *makara*, that mythical monster—seen in all Oriental art from Java to Kashmir—fulminating great gouts of foliage from his nostrils, which disseminates itself into a rippling background to the whole design. Metal lions, *garudas*, peacocks, elephants, and fishes occupy commanding positions on carved stone pillars, and huge bronze lotus thrones (*dharm-dhātu-mandal*) act as pedestals to those weighty



AN ORIEL WINDOW IN BHAIGAON.

decorative emblems known as the "Thunderbolts of Indra." Every shrine is doubly, and often trebly, guarded by pairs of grotesque beasts, whose appearance suggests that they resemble more the advanced outposts of the infernal regions rather than defenders of a sanctuary.

A city of the name of Kirtipur, situated some three miles to the north of Katmandu, contains also much that is interesting, and many records of the old order that has now changed. Its history is one of the most gruesome in the annals of the State, and is contained in the one word—the name which it was condemned to bear by its ruthless conquerors—Naskatpur, or "the City of the Cut Noses." Owing to its almost impregnable position on the crest of a hill between two and three hundred feet above the level of the surrounding plain, and also to the bravery of its citizens, it made a gallant resistance against the Gurkha invaders in 1765, but was eventually betrayed into the hands of the enemy. In one of the engagements, Surpratap Sah, a brother of the Gurkha leader, Prithi Narain, lost one of his eyes, and

this, together with the protracted nature of the siege, so enraged the conqueror that he ordered the noses and lips of every male in the town, above twelve years of age, to be cut off; those only being spared who could play on wind instruments, and who therefore might be of use as musicians in the army of the victor. In connection with this episode an indigenous history, with an eye to picturesque facts, adds that "these noses weighed seventeen *dharnis* (about 80 lb.), and the people thus mutilated were 865."

Needless to relate that Kirtipur never recovered from this conquest, and now is little better than a collection of ruins, inhabited by only 4000 souls. But what remains indicates that this city boasted of many fine buildings embellished with the characteristic art of the Newars. The durbar is much damaged, but the principal temple is in a good state, and is unique, inasmuch as it is dedicated to Bagh Bhairab—Bhairava as a tiger—the shrine containing an effigy of this animal, which is here regarded as very sacred. Grouped about are many other edifices, carved

with religious symbols and approached by rows of monsters and divinities, but Kirtipur hardly compares with the other cities of the valley in the extent of its artistic and architectural remains.

CHAPTER VI

PASHPATTI

The Doorway of Death—Its Buildings—The Daily Devotees—Women Pilgrims—The Burning-Ghat.

PASHPATTI is a picturesque collection of temples and shrines about three miles north-east of Katmandu, and on the banks of the Baghmatti River. Here this stream passes through a narrow gorge, which may be appropriately called the "Valley of Shadow," for Pashpatti is truly the doorway of death. So holy is this place that the one great desire of the Hindu is to gasp out his last breath on the steps of the "ghat," with his feet lapped by the swirls and eddies of the sacred stream. Through sad and dreary existences many of these people toil, unrelieved by any ray of happiness, drudging and starving, but experiencing their one and only thrill of joy in this

life as they are passing out of it—another view of that noble thought of Lucan, "Victurosque dii celant, ut vivere durent, Felix esse mori." To any but an Oriental, the idea of being dragged from one's death-bed, carried many miles in a jolting dooly, and then left to fight the last vain struggle on uncomfortable stone steps, with the extremities in cold water, is not an attractive one. But to the inhabitant of Nepal, and from regions far into the plains of India, this final act of penance is felt to be a fitting preparation for that mysterious journey on the other side of the River. And so lying about in corners and recesses are people in the last stage of some fell disease, groaning out their lives, tortured in body but happy in mind, because they have been spared to die within the holy precincts of Pashpatti. When this event actually takes place, the funeral pyre is built on one of the flat buttresses projecting into the sacred stream, and in the gloaming one may see the smoke drifting into the dark recesses of the "Valley of the Shadow," and the turrets and gilded roofs lit up by the glow from the fire of the dead.

But although this is the principal object of Pashpatti, it is pleasant to turn away from the sombre picture thus presented, and see it in the cheerful light of the early morning, when it teems with movement and life. For soon after dawn, as the sun glints on the golden finials of this garden of pagodas, all the people living in the neighbourhood come down in many-coloured garments to perform their prayers and ablutions before commencing on the duties of the day. The buildings are grouped on the west bank of the river, which is crossed by two romantic old bridges, like a combination of Venice and Benares in miniature. They consist mainly of courts and squares arranged in several stories or levels, and connected by frequent flights of stone steps. Picturesque pyramidal roofs cover the temples, the most important one rising above the others into a brilliant effect of fretted wood and fluted gold against the blue sky and distant snows. The courts are filled with images and shrines which have been consecrated at different periods, while before the great sanctuary is the colossal image of a

kneeling bull (Nandi), executed in copper and heavily gilt. It is hardly necessary to add that the majority of devotees believe this huge animal is wrought in solid gold.

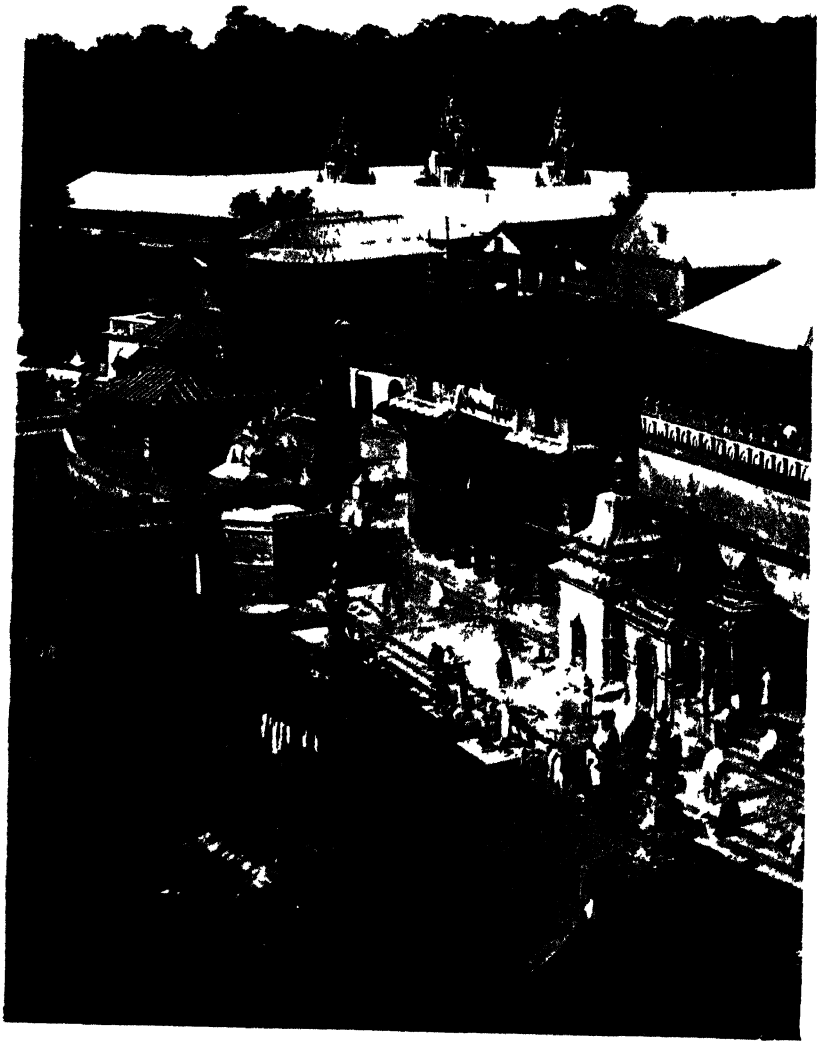
Such is the bright and barbaric aspect of Pashpatti—the holiest temple of Nepal—of such great sanctity that a pilgrimage to it is deemed an act of purer devotion than the observance of any similar rites prescribed by the Hindu religion. Its situation gives it a mystery which may account for some of this, as the gorge forming the background is a gloomy precipitous cutting through which the holy river silently and solemnly flows. Excavated in the face of the cliff high above the water, and reached only by some primitive means devised by the occupant, are several dark-looking cells in which certain fakirs are said to live and die—

"And next the shryne a pit then doth he grave,"

but it is a place of shadows, and the gay pageant below is commencing.

Quite early the edge of the water is taken up by small groups of picturesquely robed men

engaged in the occupation of selling flowers and other offerings to the devotees. Then begin to arrive, as the sun lights up the scene, many men in various bright attires, followed by bevies of women and girls in the gayest of robes. Mixed bathing is the order of the day, and all is decorum, the robing and disrobing being performed in that clever manner only to be accomplished by the Oriental. Soon the crowd grows thicker, and the gay and gorgeous scene—duplicated in the rippling waters of the Baghmatti—becomes a kaleidoscope of bright colours. It seems almost impossible to separate the picture into its individual particles, but it may be attempted. One sees a class of "Sadus," men dressed from head to foot in garments of blood-red, and another religious order is distinguished by the more usual saffron colour. A fakir strolls by nearly unnoticed, although clothed in a startling overall of leopard skins. Some of the boys are most vividly garbed, and an urchin in a combination of artistic purples catches the eye. But gay as the men are dressed, they are completely put into the shade by the



GENERAL VIEW OF TASHILAITI, THE 'PLACE OF THE DEAD'
The sacred river runs through a picturesque gorge at this spot.

brilliancy of the women's costumes. One colour scheme, so fashionable as to be repeated several times, is a bright green zouave jacket, a pink sari, and orange skirt. Deep purple confections are also much in vogue, as also a combination of crimson and saffron, while all decorate the hair with natural or artificial flowers. But what may be called the national costume of the Nepali women of the upper classes is so striking as to need a special reference. Several groups clothed in this startling fashion loiter near the ghat and then pass on into the inner precincts of the various temples. The general colour of one of these costumes may be anything bright, from a lemon yellow body and pink skirt to green body with purple skirt, but it is the "cut" of the garments which makes them so remarkable. The upper part is of a comparatively normal design, being usually a richly decorated zouave jacket in one of the colours indicated above, but the lower garment—a combination of crinoline, Turkish trousers, and fire balloon—is of such extraordinary proportions as to be one of the most extravagant forms of apparel

conceivable. The actual construction is an elaborate framework of wire or cane, over which the gores of material are laid and fall in innumerable folds, making a voluminous and unwieldy garment which oscillates with every movement of the wearer. Felt slippers of some gaudy colour peep from underneath this weird contrivance, but the crowning achievement is the elaboration of the hair. The natural inclination with respect to this feature is to part it at the front and bind it at the back, but the national method of the Nepali women is nothing if not original, and is accordingly the exact reverse of the expected. It is parted at the back above the nape of the neck and dressed in the front, forming over the forehead the regulation "donkey fringe" associated with the late Victorian period in the East End. Over the top, between the parting and the fringe, is carried a wreath of red artificial flowers, like a tiara. Add to this a heavily powdered face, eyes outlined with black, and lips touched with vermilion, a pair of tortoise-shell-rimmed goggles, and the picture is complete. Parties of these women pass at irregular



A VIEW OF THE INTERIOR OF THE HOLY TEMPLE OF KIMAGE PEACE OF TASHKENT

intervals, adding to the colour scintillating in the rippling water, and, stooping to drink from the sacred stream, or perform the ordinary ceremony of throwing in flowers to be carried away by the current, they resemble a garden of gay blossoms. Up the steep steps of the temple their forms wobble like tired balloons, a gust of music stirs the air as they enter, a ring of sweet sounding bells, and their heads may be seen above a parapet as they pass along an ambulatory. From here it is usual to throw a handful of small coin into the holy waters underneath, which is speedily scrambled for by lusty loungers on the temple steps. Each visitor to the shrine goes through exactly the same religious routine, and passes out through another doorway into the street.

But below, the gay crowd comes and goes. Youths splash about in the shallow stream or sport on the stone steps. The sun kisses the gilt pinnacles, or lights up the vermilion painted shrines. Bathers wind around them gorgeously dyed fabrics, or stand about in picturesque groups. Girls in many-tinted robes laughingly cast yellow marigolds into

the water to be swirled away by the current. All is movement, life, and colour. Where is Pashpatti, the place of the dead? A few yards lower down the floating petals, bruised and sodden, strand on a pebbly beach. A man, broken with sobs, and assisted by a small wondering-eyed boy, is building up a funeral pyre over the fair form of his daughter. The gentle voice of the Baghmatti is heard as it ripples over the shallow ford, telling of ancient sacrifices and *satis*, crooning the death-song it has sung for many centuries, as it bears away on its bosom the woes of those who have suffered and died at Pashpatti.

CHAPTER VII

THE TEMPLE OF CHANGU-NARAIN

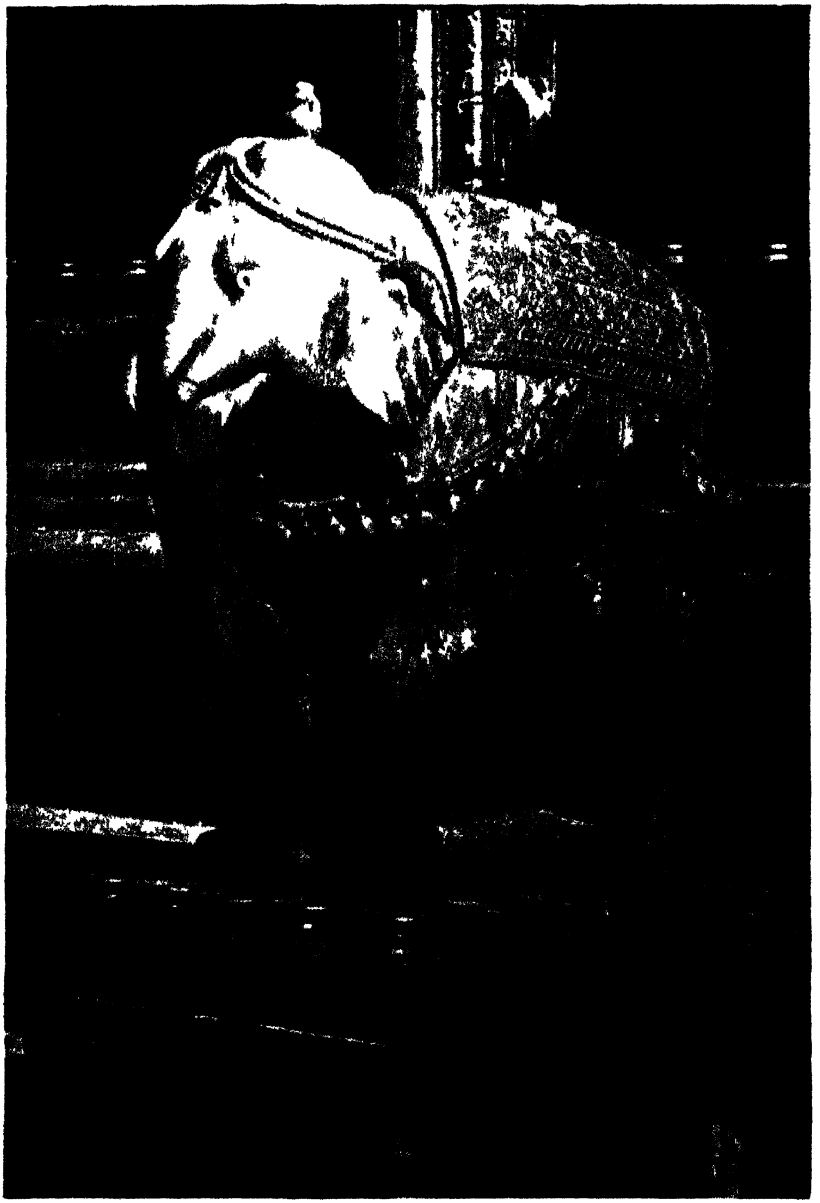
The Situation of the Temple—Pilgrims to the Shrine—The Art and Architecture of the Temple—The Pilgrims' Ritual.

A MARCH of eight miles east of Katmandu brings the traveller to a ford across the Manchra River. Above this rises a steep hill, a spur of the Mahadeo Pokri, which, scarred by a winding path of stone steps, leads to the Vishnu temple of Changu-Narain. Our camp has been pitched on the hillside just below this edifice, and late in the afternoon we find ourselves absorbing the magnificent view of the valley lying at our feet. The cultivated fields, divided into squares of various crops, look like a great patchwork coverlet in russet greens, with purple and brown townlets nestling in the folds. From this outwork of

the higher hills almost the whole extent of the valley is visible—a great oval basin, land-locked by fine wooded mountains, above which at various points are seen the soaring peaks of the snowy range—

"Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise."

As we gaze, the light is fading and the mountains gradually assume a deeper, clearer purple against a primrose and orange sky. Like a silver ribbon the Manchra winds its serpentine course through the low-lying rice fields, losing itself in the amethyst twilight. Then the day dissolves itself into night, and the waxing moon throws its glamour over all. Softly and gently with a feeling of exquisite peace the gathering light transforms the scene into a misty, tender nocturne of mauve and silver. A few lights twinkle out in the villages and towns, but the effect is of an indefinite, mysterious lake, and these but the reflections of the stars. From somewhere in the distance comes the faint sound of a temple bell, and instinctively the mind switches like a flash over the 6000 miles which separate



ELEPHANT OUTSIDE THE SOUTHERN ENTRANCE TO CHANGU NARAIN *Ia*, 95

the Hindu temple on these Himalayan heights, and that summons to the evening service floating over the meadows in England—a touch of nature which makes the whole world kin.

"Ave Maria, blessed be the hour,
The time, the clime, the spot where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd with prayer."

Changu-Narain is one of four small hamlets, each containing a shrine sacred to the deity Narain. This divinity is a representative of Vishnu, the Preserver, who is one of the three personal manifestations of the Spiritual Being, Brahma. These shrines are situated in different parts of the valley, and to visit all four in one day is a religious feat often performed, although it necessitates a circuit from Katmandu of 44 miles. The particular shrine at Changu is the most popular, and also the most wealthy. Kirkpatrick stated in 1793 that "the interior of this temple is only

accessible by means of an offering of a *tolah* of gold to the god, although the individual thus propitiating his priests is at liberty to introduce to the interior, along with himself, as many other persons as he pleases," an easy-going regulation which might be interpreted according to the extent of the visitor's circle of acquaintances. Part of the pilgrimage consists in climbing the flight of endless steps, but the devotees, accustomed to mountaineering, toil up the steep and broken stairway easily and cheerily. Unrestricted by the regulations of the " purdah," and unoppressed by any gloomy religious observances, the women, decked with flowers and bearing trays of golden blossoms which play such an important part in their sacred ritual, gaily straggle along. By the roadside gardens are maintained, bright with cosmos, marigolds, dahlias, lilies, and chrysanthemums, from which the pilgrim may gather at will his offerings to the gods. As a little family party mounts the winding flight, chatting and laughing, suddenly a hush will fall on them—a suppressed giggle from one of the young girls—

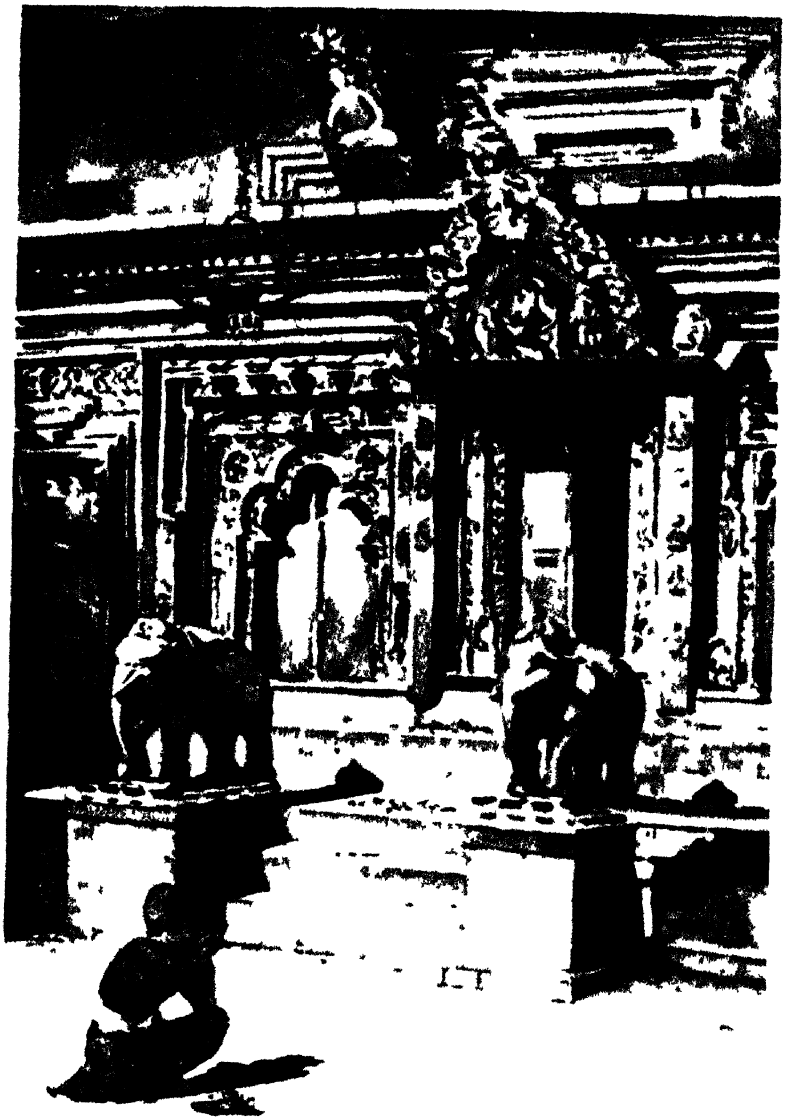
as she narrowly escapes treading on a special step around which every devout person carefully walks, for on it is painted the holy emblem of The Eye. The coolie carrying his load up the steep stairway suddenly "jinks" off on to the grass in order that his feet may not pollute the sacred sign. But in Nepal, unrecognized and apparently insignificant shrines and sanctified places encumber the ground—the streets are literally "paved with good intentions," for almost every other slab or stone is daubed with vermilion, and held sacred. In no country are there so many "sermons in stones" as in Nepal, and the uninitiated sightseer, with eyes aloft on carved balconies and perforated windows, is in constant danger of profaning these holy emblems with his uncompromising boots. But the inhabitants of the valley with few exceptions are liberal-minded and reasonable over matters of this kind, and when in doubt, it is not much trouble to slip off one's footgear—an act which will often permit one to step into the innermost recesses of the holiest of shrines.

Arrived at the outer door of the temple,

we pass through a sombre archway, an excellent foil to the fantasy of colour and material, which, throbbing in the sunlight, leaps to the eye beyond. At first sight the scene appears to be a miscellany of art and architecture, tossed into picturesque confusion, but overcoming this illusion, it is possible to analyse it and understand the general arrangement. The ordinary plan of these buildings is a square courtyard, around which runs a *dharmasala* or resting-place for the devotees. The actual shrine is a pagoda in the centre of the court, around which subsidiary altars, statues, and temples have been added by devout donors. This combination is in all cases picturesque in the extreme, and Changu-Narain is without doubt the richest of all the Nepalese pagodas in carving, colour, and embossed metal. The entrance to the large central pagoda is one mass of hammered brass, beaten up into angels and devils, reptiles and fishes, winged creatures and floral forms. In front, on pedestals, brazen beasts guard the portals, the baleful effect of one ferocious-looking griffin being humorously intensified by a

garland of marigolds carelessly thrown around its neck. On each flank of this side of the building is a stone pillar with a lotus capital; the one, around the base of which is a coiled serpent, supports a great brass *chakra*—the disc of Vishnu—while the other, rising from the back of a monster tortoise, is crowned by a huge metal conch-shell (*sankra*). Above is the usual overhanging pagoda-eave, the deep shadow of which is cleverly broken by carved wooden brackets, composed of sprawling demons and deities with many arms. The pavement in front is encumbered with bells suspended from stone supports, altars with embossed tympanums, brass umbrellas, and dragons promiscuously crouching around, while a very precious metal effigy of the founder, facing the main doorway, is carefully protected by an ironwork screen forged like coarse chain-mail. On the pillar surmounted by the *chakra* is a long inscription cleanly cut in Sanskrit, which is considered to be the oldest and most interesting in Nepal. It records a donation to the god of Changu-Narain made by the queen Rajyavati on the

occasion of a great victory, and bears a date corresponding to 496 A.D. The remaining sides of the temple are replete with artistic symbolism, the south aspect being specially striking. The central feature of this side is a triple doorway of wood, richly carved, and encrusted with plaques of beaten brass. The woodwork has been brilliantly painted — probably crudely so in the first instance, with raw reds and blues, greens and yellows—but the kindly hand of the Master Artist—Nature —has blended and softened the effect into a mellow harmonious whole. Two large and imposing stone elephants pose on pedestals in front of this rich colour scheme, their prominent parts picked out with vermilion, while above, a hanging brass lamp fringed with metal pendants sways and tinkles in the breeze. Around the courtyard fragments of sculptured deities lie in confusion, each receiving its share of devotion, being anointed with oil, adorned with flowers, or perfumed with incense, according to the impulse of the worshipper. Groups of pilgrims wander through with offerings, each individual bearing



DOORWAY TO SHRINE OF THE CHANGU NARAIN TEMPLE

a brass tray on which are a bunch of marigolds, a *lotah* of milk, some spices, a few grains of rice, etc. These are put before the shrine, a short prayer murmured, and the party passes on. On one side a few disciples sit together and chant their *mantras* in a monotonous key, while in a small chapel—surrounded by an absorbed congregation of brightly clothed devotees—a priest in saffron garments and decked with garlands reads extracts from some holy book, and expounds these in a melodious voice. A background to this picture is the *dharmasala*, or pilgrims' quarters, around the courtyard, ornamented with a wooden arcade, richly carved and profusely decorated oriel windows. A quaint eave-board projects over this elevation, and the impression of this part is one of a mediæval medley—an irregular square of Old World half-timber houses, peaked gables, overhanging upper stories, red-tiled roofs, and all the picturesque features of a past age.

We paid our farewell visit to this wonderful temple by moonlight. Much of it was in deep shadow, relieved only by the flickering light

of *cherags* (small earthenware lamps), but this gave it an added mystery. The brasswork faintly reflected the different illuminations, while out of the gloom glazed metallic eyes leered at us from the ever-watchful dragons guarding the portals.

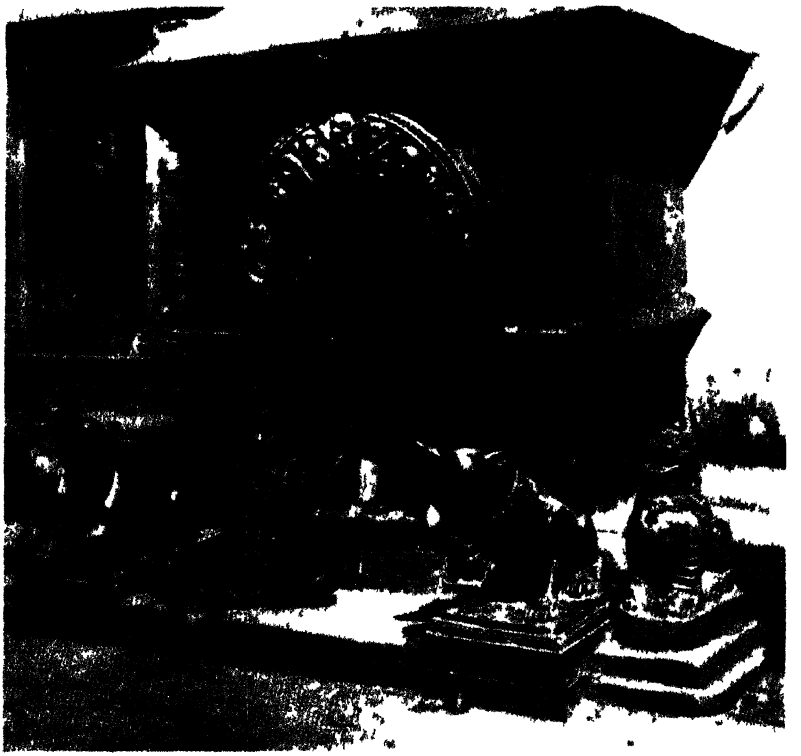
CHAPTER VIII

FESTIVALS

The Popularity of the Festivals — The Machendranath Festival—The Procession—The Dassera Festival—The Review—The Dassera Procession blessing the Colours at the Kot—Minor Celebrations, "Kaka boli" and "Swana boli"—The Pilgrimage—The Sacred Lake of Gosainthan.

KIRKPATRICK, one of the earliest European historians of Nepal, has remarked in his description of the Valley that "there are nearly as many temples as houses, and as many idols as inhabitants, there not being a fountain, a river, or a hill within its limits that is not consecrated to one or other of the Hindu or Buddhist deities." And just as almost every situation is sanctified by its altar or shrine, so almost every day in the year is marked by its religious ceremony or festival. Many of these are mere local observances, associated with

a village saint or in honour of a minor divinity, but a large number are kept as general holidays, sometimes extending over many days at a time, during which period the whole population devotes itself to ritual, or revelry, or both, according to the religious significance of the event. One of the greatest thinkers of the East has written, "Religion is the prop of all beings, everything is embraced in Religion, therefore Religion is said to be excellent over everything else" (Taitarya-ranyak), and in no place is the letter of this more strictly adhered to than in Nepal. On such an occasion as the "Dassera" festival the routine of daily labour is put entirely on one side for over a week while the rites and ceremonies of this feast are observed, and at varying intervals during the year other festivals are celebrated which occupy similar periods of time. In fairness, however, to the Newar, and in defence of customs which must necessarily interfere not a little with the internal trade of the country, it should be noted that more often than not the share which the individual takes in these festivals is not optional, but



SHRINE DEDICATED TO GANESH AT PATAN

depends on his hereditary occupation. Under the Newar kings from the earliest times, the various services connected with these ceremonials have been the duty or privilege of certain families or castes. A particular family has for generations been expected to perform the dancing, while another, of the carpenter caste, has from time immemorial constructed the great car in which the god at the Machendra-jatra festival is seated. Others supplied the music, and the leading family of artists modelled the masks and executed the painting in connection with these picturesque events. It is stated that an order existed that "if any Newar should without sufficient reason (which he will be required to show) absent himself and shirk the performance of his hereditary duty, he is tried and fined, the amount of fine varying according to his means and the importance of the duty which he ought to have performed." The popularity and magnificence of these festivals has declined within recent years, and the various regulations regarding them somewhat relaxed, but sufficient of these pageants are maintained at different seasons

of the year to indicate the religious fervour of the Nepalese.

There are ten great national festivals specially observed by the Newars, and three others of Hindu origin, not peculiar to Nepal, being also kept in the plains of India, which are celebrated with considerable pomp by the inhabitants of the Valley. Apart from these there are subsidiary ceremonies, besides frequent processions on some pretext or another, such as good or bad fortune, births, marriages, sickness, deaths, etc., so that there are excuses ever present for the workman to leave his tools, or the shopkeeper his goods, and gaze with continuous delight on the carnivals that his spiritual guides have never omitted to provide for his delectation.

Of the purely indigenous festivals the most important of all is that in honour of Machendranath or Matsyendra Nath, who may be regarded as the patron saint of Nepal. There is a long rambling legend with regard to this divinity and his association with the country, but the ceremony of annually exhibiting his present-day embodiment in the form of an

idol to thousands of his followers is one of the most fascinating events of the Valley, and a function which has been maintained for centuries. The ceremony is in three parts: first, the bathing of the image of the god at a particular shrine; second, the dragging of the image in a triumphal car through the principal streets of Patan; and third, the unrobing of the idol and the display of its garments to the people. The second portion of this programme is particularly striking, and is a festival eminently characteristic of the State. The car is a huge, unwieldy structure, with massive wheels, on the solid spokes of which are painted in distinctive colours the eyes of Bhairab or Shiva. Surmounting this is the chamber containing the deity, built up in the form of a column, somewhat resembling a Maypole, and between 60 and 70 feet high. This construction is only dragged for a distance of about a mile and a half, but this short journey ordinarily occupies at least four days, as certain prescribed halts are made, and neither is the car itself nor are the roads adapted for easy progression. The scene is a

wild and barbaric one. Through the narrow streets overhung by wooden balconies crammed with excited groups of onlookers, or across the great open square, the platforms of all the picturesque buildings forming vantage grounds on which the crowds congregate, the car, dragged by over a hundred willing devotees, makes its triumphal tour. As these panting individuals become exhausted, so their places are taken by others from the packed mass of spectators, who, grasping one of the many ropes attached to the large under-beams or shafts, joyfully contribute their share to this portion of the ceremony. The superstructure of the car, overlaid with plates of copper-gilt, and surmounted by a metal umbrella with gay streamers and ribbons, sways until it almost overturns as the groaning wheels bump over the uneven pavement of the city, or sink deep into the soft soil of the roadway outside, but willing hands cling manfully to the guide ropes, and thus accident is averted. Like a great ship staggering through a heavy sea — its curved prow terminating in a gilt figurehead of Bhairab, and apparently forcing

its way through the seething mass of humans who like billows surround it in one capacity and another—the great god Matsyendra in his car, with strain and cry makes his annual journey. On a staging somewhat resembling a deck the officiating priests take their stand, and, like sailors, cling valiantly to the oscillating structure. A procession naturally accompanies the car, elephants gaily painted and caparisoned move ponderously along, bearing in their gold and silver howdahs the royalties of the State. Bands make joyful, if somewhat barbaric, music on tambourines, cymbals, trumpets, conches, and drums, while bevies of girls carrying garlands of flowers enliven the proceedings with song and dance. Other attendants bear great bells on poles, golden umbrellas, incense burners, fly-whisks, banners, and all the insignia of the great deity to whom they are doing honour. And so for four days and often longer, moving from place to place, this unique ceremonial is maintained with shout and song, religious enthusiasm, feasting and rejoicing, until the final portion of the complete and complicated

ritual is accomplished and the god is returned to his temple at Patan, where he remains in state until the following year.

Of the Hindu festivals, the "Dassera" or Durga Puja is the most celebrated, and is a week of many functions in Nepal. It commemorates the victory of the goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasur, who usually takes the form of a buffalo. The scene is a popular one with the Nepali art craftsman, who frequently introduces it in wood or metal in his decorations of the temple. The plate facing p. 105 is a tympanum carved in wood, which adorns a small shrine in Patan, and depicts the artist's conception of this legend. Durga, sixteen-armed representing sixteen different forces, dances in ecstasy on the world's Evil, which is symbolized by a buffalo. The act of crushing this emblem of wickedness gives great joy to the other deities, and the artist has carved Ganesh, Verun, and others of the Hindu Pantheon, playing on musical instruments as an indication of their pleasure. The remainder of the composition is replete with artistic allegory, which is one of the most

striking characteristics of Nepalese art. But the fact that from the earliest days the buffalo has been regarded as the living representation of evil, has led to the principal feature of this festival being a colossal sacrifice of these animals wherever the believers in this aspect of Hinduism are gathered together.

The general programme of the "Durga Puja" as observed in Nepal consists in a review of the troops, a procession, and the ceremony of "blessing the colours." At least ten days are reserved for the whole function, and there are other supplementary items in the Dassera ritual, but these are the main events. The review is a very popular affair with the Gurkhas, as the martial spirit burns keenly within them, and upwards of ten thousand troops line up in a hollow square on the great *maidan* or parade ground on the outskirts of the city of Katmandu. The Prime Minister, the Commander-in-Chief, and all the officers of the State arrive mounted, and await the approach of the King, under the shade of a large and conspicuous tree in the centre of the field. His Majesty motors from

his palace on to the scene, and is greeted with great acclamation, several bands playing the Nepalese National Anthem. A perfunctory inspection follows, and then a *feu-de-joie*, very creditably performed, ripples up and down the ranks. The bands situated in various positions again break into music, being followed by volleys, more music, and then fifteen rounds of "independent," in which the artillery joins. The air is impregnated with much noise, smoke, and music, and a wholesome martial ardour thrills all concerned.

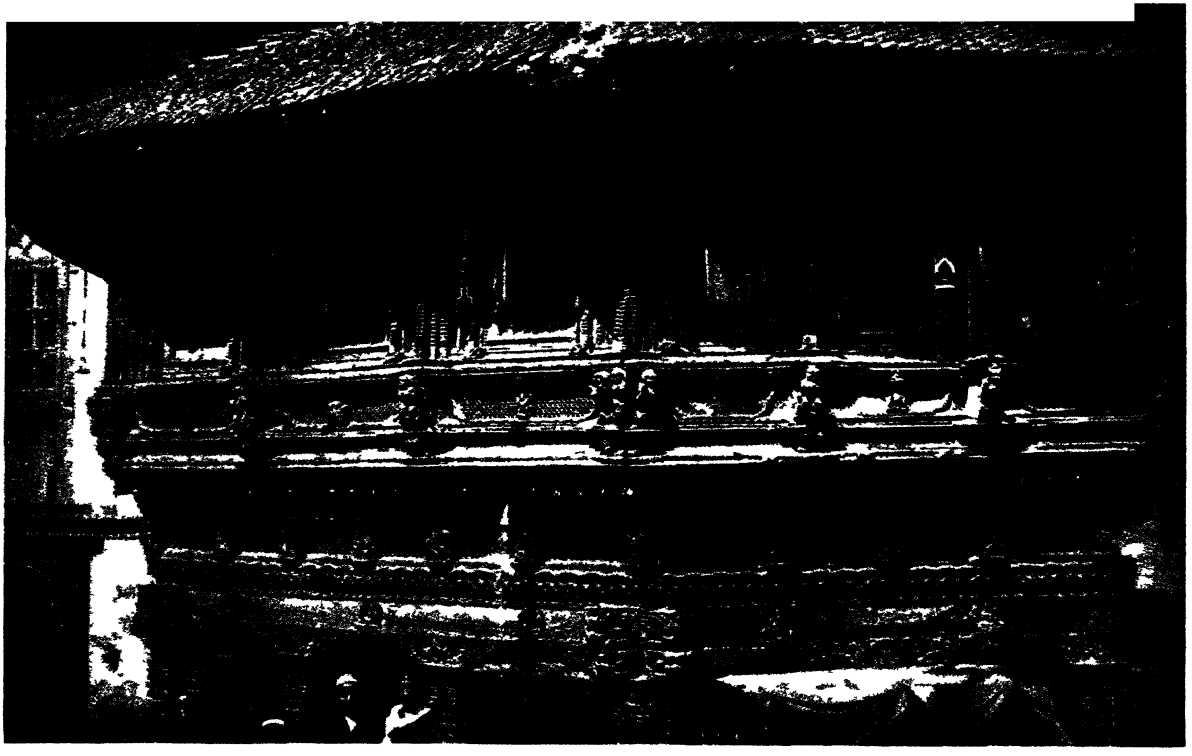
While this is taking place, in the city, which forms an appropriate background to the review, a unique pageant is being performed. Through the winding streets of wooden houses a procession wends its way to do honour to the goddess Kali, and it is only natural that, while the men are engaged outside the city wall in military exercises, this portion of the festival should be the concern of the women of Nepal. And a most interesting sight is presented to the crowds of onlookers who line the streets and houses of the capital to view this little known feature of the Durga



THE BACK OF THE DURBAR AT KATMANDU.

Puja. The personnel of the procession is primarily a royal one, and consists of female representatives of all the different houses connected with the reigning family of the country. It is not the custom for the royal ladies themselves to attend this ceremonial, although no doubt that was the original intention of this function, but their places are taken by subordinate deputies, who, arrayed in all the gorgeousness of the national costume, personate outwardly their mistresses of the blood-royal. The crowd is gathered thickly in the tortuous streets, and awaits with keen expectation the advent of the performers. A sudden movement among the groups in the balconies, which speedily communicates itself to the mingled throng below, and the van of the procession surges into view. In front is borne a palanquin swathed in scarlet, and supposed to contain an image of the goddess. This is followed by the leading royal representative, a lady of the Maharaja's household, who, solemnly and alone, marches with slow and stately step under a mammoth red umbrella. Attached

to this pompous figure by a connecting ribbon of silver is a peculiar arrangement carried by attendants, and an object of great reverence to all. It is a metal dish, partly screened by profuse decorations of flowers, tinsel, and crimson cloth, and holding holy water, brought direct from the sacred stream of the Ganges. Following this come the Court ladies, two and two, rivalling a chain of butterflies' wings in the quaint cut of their costumes and the vividness of the colouring. The leading couple are clad in a piercing emerald green, their voluminous satin trousers—each leg of which would have exceeded a crinoline of the "forties" in itself—draped partially by gauze over-jackets flashing with tinsel. Each carries a smaller red, long-handled umbrella, but kept furled out of deference to the leading lady at the front. These are followed by a rainbow of bright colours, pale blue succeeded by vivid carmine, then pure white, and after this a deep red, with a royal purple behind, more green—a turquoise—and so the colours ripple up the line—a double string of faceted jewels, the sunlight scintil-



ELABORATE WOODWORK IN THE MAIN STREET OF KATMANDU

The Newaris often paint their carving with brilliant colour—emerald, vermilion, blue and orange

lating on the gems and tinsel, and all around the rich dark brown background of the old timbered houses, relieved here and there by splashes of colour among the buzzing crowd of onlookers. A striking feature of each costume in this procession is the head-dress—no veil or *sari* being carried—but each individual wears her hair in a low fringe, cut straight across the forehead, and twisted into two small coils in front of each ear. At the back, the coiffure is parted to the nape of the neck, and then brought forward into the shape of a coronet over the crown. Poised above all is a silver tiara, while here and there are small wreaths of gaily-coloured flowers, introduced among the plaits. Surmounting faces liberally powdered and heavily touched up with rouge and vermilion, the general effect of this unique combination may be imagined.

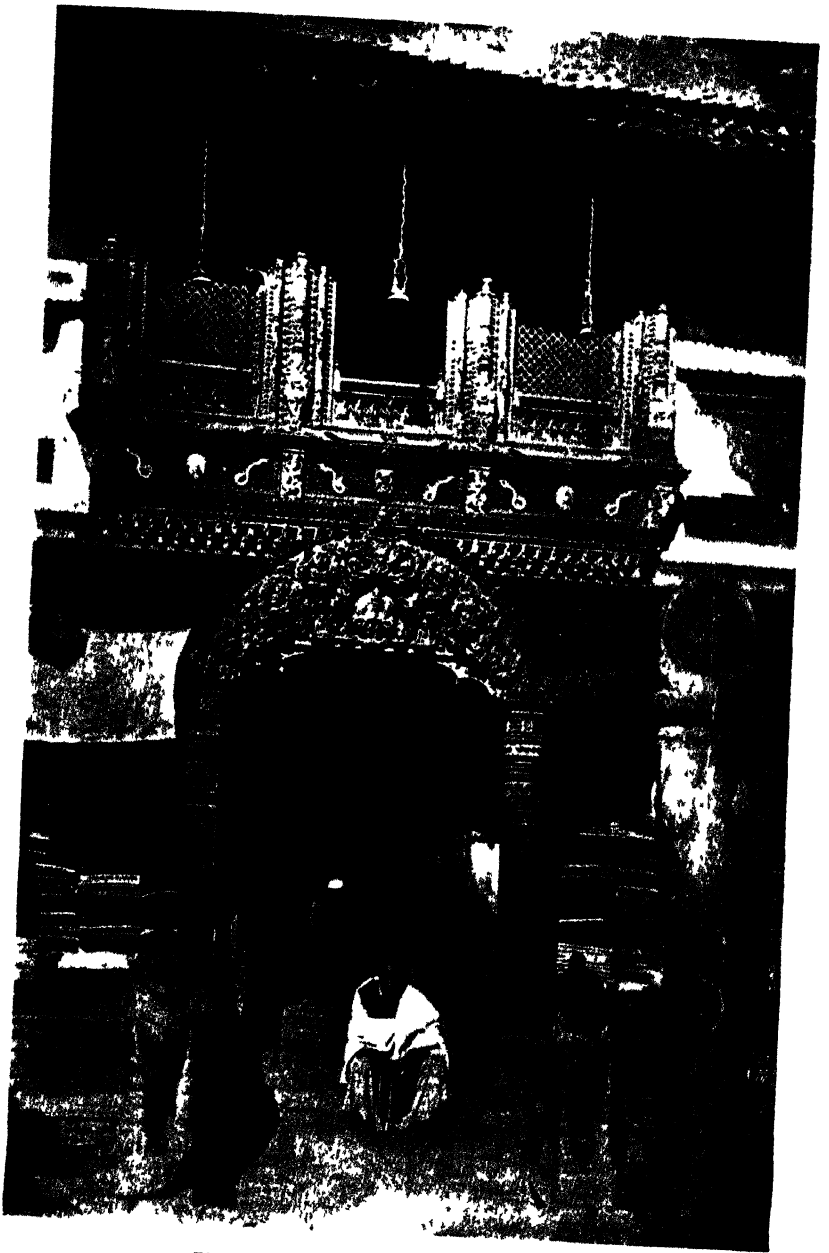
One of the last events of the Dassera festival is that which has been alluded to as " Blessing the Colours," and is conducted in an historic enclosure in Katmandu known as the " Kot." A commonplace-looking courtyard in itself,

it has been the site of some of the most epoch-making events in the modern annals of the State. Here in 1846 took place a series of indiscriminate murders and massacres, the truth regarding which will never be known, but the best blood of the country seems to have been wantonly spilt to satisfy the ambitions of the various political parties striving for sole power. Dr. Oldfield, who came to Nepal some four years after this "Reign of Terror," and lived for many years in the State, has left lurid accounts of the slaughters in the "Kot," and with his description in hand the tragedies can be realized. It is a story of unarmed men hunted from room to room only to be cut down at last, or others herded like sheep in the open court-yard, and picked off with rifles by marksmen stationed in the balconies. There is the window also, in the uppermost story, where the chronicler relates the Queen stood, a calm and unmoved witness of the horrors being perpetrated below, and only leaning forward now and again to urge on her blood-thirsty supporters, and calling out, "Kill and

destroy my enemies." The bodies of the slain were heaped up together, without reference to rank, and nearly filled the quadrangle surrounding the Kot. But many years have elapsed since these days of gloom, and it is a different scene that is being enacted on this same site to-day, although still a bloody and barbaric one. For it is the custom with the Nepalis to devote the ninth day of the Durga Puja to the worship of the armaments of war, and this is performed by sacrificing to the goddess an enormous number of buffaloes. Every regimental officer is expected to present a victim (the higher officers giving two or three) as an offering to the colours of his own corps, so that at some of the army headquarters, notably at the Kot, these animals are slaughtered by the thousand.

From out of the crowded street we enter a narrow passage, and, passing through a doorway, a wild scene greets the eye. The sacrificial portion of the ceremony is nearly over, but what remains is a curious combination of a battlefield and a shambles. The participants in the festival are grouped around the

four sides of the courtyard in different vivid costumes and uniforms, leaving the centre free for the sacrifice. Here are grouped the stands of colours, bright draperies in themselves, but made still more gay with garlands of flowers and streamers. In front of each stand is the sacrificial post, and beyond that a great mound of decapitated animals, mute and gory witnesses of an inexplicable custom. As we enter, a living victim is dragged forward and tied by the neck to the post, fear naturally causing the animal to draw back, thus exposing and extending its neck. The executioner approaches bearing a *kora*, a weapon with a wide curved blade, having the point formed by two scallops, and, awaiting an opportune moment, dexterously severs the head of the animal with one powerful blow. This action is the signal for a blare of trumpets, the energetic firing of guns, and every one making some sign of his gratification at the sacrifice. This is continued until all the animals contributed are dispatched, when a procession is formed, headed by the band, and the "Blessing of the Colours" takes place. All the officers

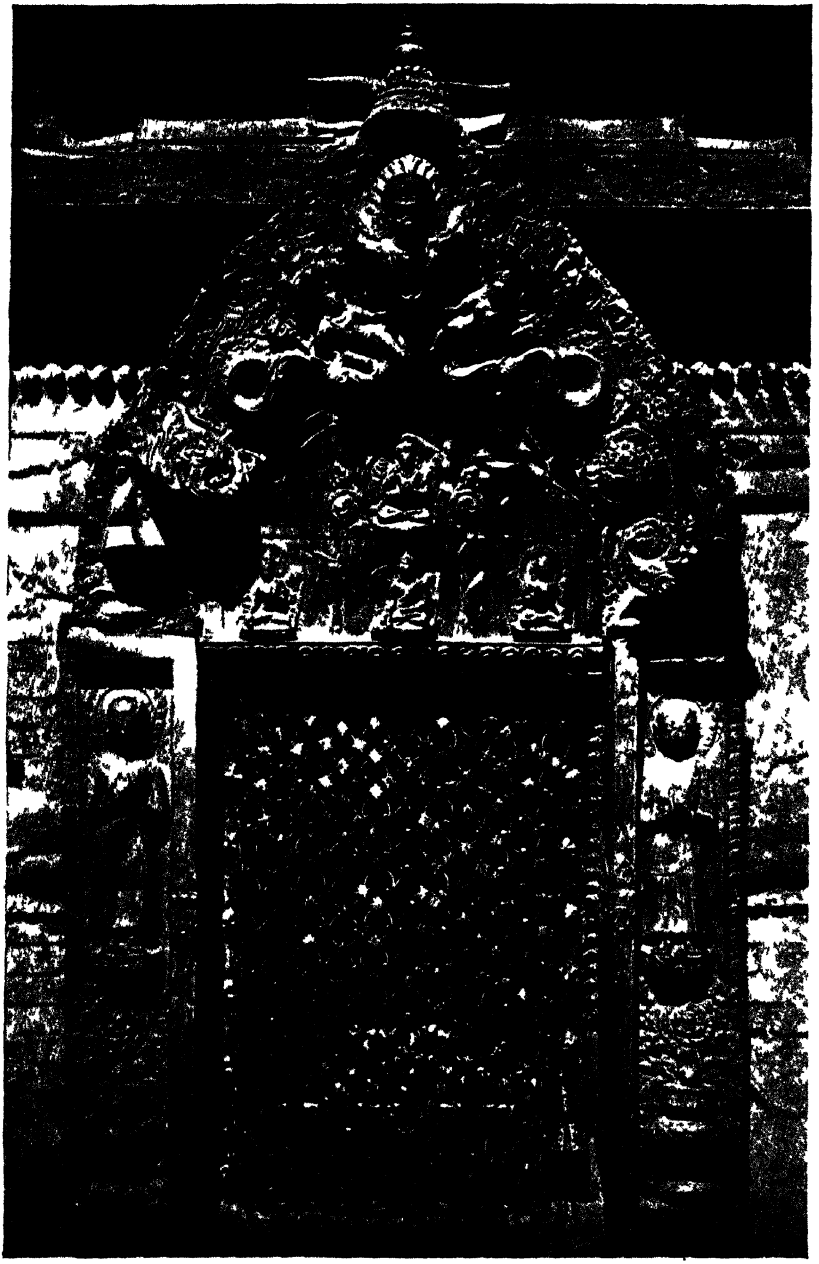


ENTRANCE TO A TEMPLE IN KATMANDU.

join in this, the principal figure being the Commander-in-Chief, who, accompanied by attendants bearing a great brass basin of fresh blood, now conducts the ceremony. Marching up to each stand of colours, this fine-looking warrior, dressed in easy but appropriate "mufti," solemnly dips both hands in the basin of gore, and claps these together with the fabric of the flag between, thus stamping an impression of a bloody hand on each side of the standard. Each colour is treated in this way, and the ceremony at this stage is dramatic in the extreme. Hot glaring sunlight illuminates the scene, flashing on the brass implements, censors, lamps, etc., which, strewn with offerings of flowers and fruit, lie tossed and tumbled about in reckless profusion. The banners themselves of all hues are a brilliant note of colour, while added to this are the uniforms and costumes of the performers, who, profusely garlanded with marigolds, move to and fro. The wild music of the band, the spasmodic firing of guns, the revolting mounds of decapitated bullocks, the ground almost awash with blood, the strong smell of which

hangs heavy in the air, through all this moves the grey-headed Commander, in a dignified manner carrying out his inexorable portion of the ritual; stepping over the heaps of blossom, poor simple flowers with their petals dabbled with gore, he blesses the colours one by one according to the time-honoured tradition of the Durga Puja.

Among the minor celebrations of this festival, two curious customs are observed which occupy two consecutive days. The first of these is called the "Kaka boli," and on this occasion it is the practice of all the people to show kindness to the common crow. These birds in almost all parts of India are a great pest, and their persistent thieving makes them the enemies of all. It must, therefore, be a puzzling matter for the crow tribe to find their predations unchecked, and even large quantities of food placed in prominent positions, which they are permitted to devour unmolested. San Vicente and his Crow may have some remote association with this custom, which also strangely reflects the old ballad—



A COPPER GILT SHRINE AT THE TEMPLE OF SHAMBU NĀTH.

"My good worthy masters, a pittance bestow,
Some oatmeal, or barley, or wheat for the crow,
A loaf, or a penny, or e'en what you will.
From a poor man, a grain of his salt may suffice,
For your crow swallows all, and is not overnice."

The day succeeding the "Kaka boli" is known as the "Swana boli," and this is observed by every dog in the streets being not only fed, but decorated with garlands and parts painted with vermilion. Every kindness and attention is shown to the wandering pariah dog, unfortunately for this one day only, the "dog day" of Nepal. The origin of this performance may be traced to the Hindu epic, the "Mahabharata," containing the account of Draupadi and his dog. This animal is supposed to have been an incarnation of Dharma raja, the divine judge, and this seems to suggest "the faithful hound" of Odysseus, with whose story "the poetry of the world begins."

From the Festival it is not a far cry to the Pilgrimage—

Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of truth to walk upon,
My scrip of joy immortal diet:
My bottle of salvation.

My gown of glory, Hope's true gage
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage—
Whilst my soul, like a quiet Palmer,
Travelleth towards the land of Heaven."

RAYLEIGH.

The pilgrimage is a characteristic feature of most religions of the Orient, and was a common event until recent years with the devout people of the West, but since the time of the Crusades it has declined in Europe. Nepal, like many another Eastern country, can boast of one spot within its confines more holy than any other, for far in the bosom of "the encircling mountains" lies the Sacred Lake of Gosainthan. Due north of the Valley of Nepal, and, where the eternal snows hang highest in the ethereal space, one bold bluff peak stands out whose precipitous sides appear inaccessible to every living thing except the vulture floating in the blue. Yet every year hundreds of devotees painfully scale this great mountain in order to worship a rock which is thought by the pious to represent the deity Nila-kenta, or to bathe in the holy pool in which that massive boulder is sunk. No European has yet been permitted

to gaze on this transcendental scene, but it has been described by Oldfield as a "large, tawny-coloured rock, of an oval shape, the rounded top of which can be seen sunk a foot or more beneath the surface of the tranquil and transparent water. The pious worshippers of Shiva, as they stand on the edge of the sacred lake, look on this unhewn rock as a divinely carved representation of Mahadeo, and fancy they can trace out in it the figure of the deity reclining full length upon a bed of serpents. This rock must have been deposited in its present position when the lake was filled by an ancient glacier, and sunk as it is in the centre of the ice-cold waters, it can never have been touched by mortal hands." And to gaze on this natural wonder, the small shopkeeper will leave his place in the city bazaar where he has spent all the years of his life without a change, toil for eight days up the narrow dangerous tracks, and eventually, if he has not perished from the severe cold or is buried beneath avalanches, has the supreme joy of reaching the long-looked-for goal. Only those who have accompanied one of these

Eastern pilgrimages, be it across the burning desert, packed in the pilgrim ship, or over the glaciers of the Himalayas, can understand the intense religious feeling which throbs within every one of the poor souls who is undertaking this self-imposed task. Whether it is due to a sudden impulse which causes the workman to cast down his tools, hurriedly wrap a few necessities in a cloth, and join a party of wanderers already on the road, or whether it is the result of a lifetime of thought and saving for this one great penance, the spirit which permeates each individual is the same—one earnest, profound desire to reach the sacred spot or joyfully perish in the effort to do so. Follow in the wake of one of these great expeditions, strung out for miles along the mountain passes, and the lessons taught will supply much food for reflection. Of all the thousands who annually undertake these adventurous journeys, men, women, and children, old and young, the halt, the lame, the sick, aged, and even the dying, not one turns back, but, ever pressing forward with bright, expectant eyes gazing from their

haggard faces, they are sustained with but one thought, one aim, and one hope, to absorb in the prescribed manner some of the sanctity which enshrouds the mystical place they are determined to attain. One sees old women attempting to scale the heights, dragging their aged limbs a few yards, and then sinking down exhausted from the unusual exercise, gasping and palpitating from the rarefied atmosphere, shivering from the intense cold, but buoyed up with that "loadstone to hearts and loadstar to all eyes" which signals to them from the distant snows. Or mothers struggling on with children at their breasts, sometimes even born at some stage of the pilgrimage, but neither births nor deaths affect this slowly moving throng which daily draws nearer its goal. And then the cold grey light dawns on the last morning, the foremost pilgrims are seen running like black specks across the final field of snow, and, as one draws closer, a shrill, weird chorus of cries can be heard, like a flock of seagulls around a wreck. As the last intervening crag is scaled a strange wild scene comes into view. Naked, the devotees are

rushing into the ice-cold waters of the lake; others, as if transfigured, stand fixed and dumb, seemingly overcome with religious fervour, while some, repeatedly leaping in the air, give vent to their joy in delirious shouts. And in one form or another these fanatical performances are enacted at certain dates or seasons in every year at one or other of the various Hindu shrines which lie concealed in the ice-bound fastnesses of the Himalayas, whether around the great pillar of ice at Amarnath in Kashmir, the fountain of fire at Jawala-mukhi (flame mouth) in Kangra, or the sacred lake of Gosainthan in Nepal; and Gosainthan is the cruellest penance of them all. Those who return, ever after live in a religious plane placed high above their associates, and the glamour of their pilgrimage brightens their narrow lives as they have never known before. But there are also the others, those absent ones whose bones lie under the snows, beneath the rocks, among the boulders, or amid the ice of the long and tortuous path to Gosainthan, and one wonders if those are not more blessed than all.

CHAPTER IX

THE ARTS OF THE NEWARS

Art and Religion—Indian and Chinese Influences—Nepalese Architecture—The "Chaitya"—Buddhist Temples—Bodhnāth and Shambu-Nāth—Symbolism of the "Chaitya"—The "Pagoda"—Origin of the Pagoda.

THE Art of the Newars is essentially a religious art, ordained and consecrated to the service of the country's creeds. A brief description of these creeds is given in a previous chapter—the religious state of the country, with a special reference to its artistic aspect, being defined as a coalition of the two faiths of Brahmanism and Buddhism. To the student of theological systems, this definition of the religious conscience of Nepal may be open to objection, and Hodgson goes as far as to deny the possibility of an identity "between two creeds, the speculative tenets of which are as wide asunder as heaven and earth." The explanation of

the frequent juxtaposition of the emblems of both cults in the same temple is said to be due to these images and symbols having been borrowed from Brahmanism, and being adopted "into Buddhism—just as the statue of a Capitoline Jupiter became the very orthodox effigy of St. Paul, because the Romanists chose to adopt the Pagan idol in an orthodox sense." Sylvain Levi, in a learned treatment of the subject, suggests a compromise, and endeavours to explain that the situation is almost impossible for the Westerner to comprehend, except that as the Catholic Church can enrich itself indefinitely with new saints, so "l'Inde peut s'enricher de nouveaux dieux." In this way Buddha, who long passed as a kind of Brahmanical Antichrist, was eventually absorbed into the cult of Vishnu, while Buddhism, in order to keep its hold on the people, accepted many of the more popular beliefs of the Hindu Pantheism. To the ordinary observer, the temples of Nepal display a religious tolerance, which is a striking contrast to the communities of the West, but at the same time this system of a combination of all creeds,



METAL WORK ON A TEMPLE FRONT AT KATMANDU

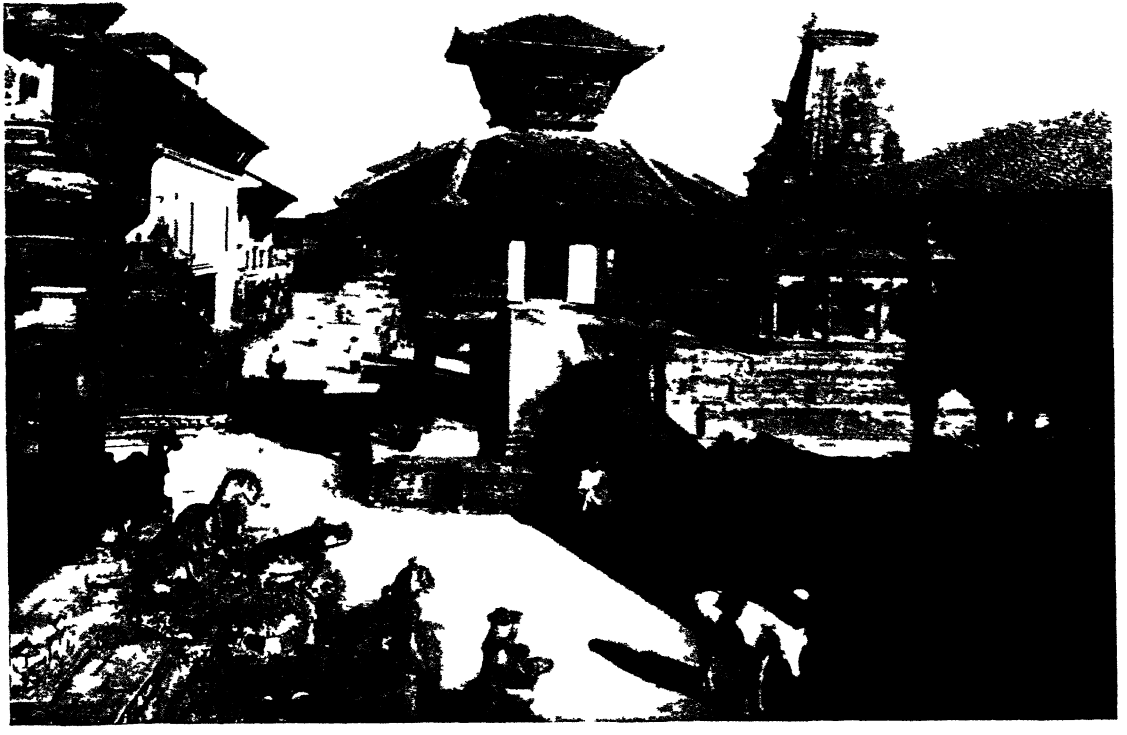
In Nepalese art there is no unmeaning ornament Every detail is full of religious symbolism

whereby one place of worship is enabled to embrace three or four different cults, may not be altogether disinterested in its motive. For no devotee visits one of these buildings without contributing his mite towards its maintenance, and "No penny, no paternoster" is the business motto of those to whose special care the holy edifice is consigned. In putting into effect this precept those responsible for the policy naturally cast their nets as widely as possible, and in most temples, therefore, the Vishnuvite, the Buddhist, and the Lamaist find their wants supplied, and their own particular images and attributes awaiting their obeisance.

Not only is Nepalese art of an intensely religious character, but hand in hand with this it is also supremely symbolic; there is no "unmeaning ornament," almost every element in its composition being emblematic of the creed it adorns. In other words, art was utilized by the priesthood to catch the eye of the illiterate many, to put before those who could not read a visible tangible object which illustrated a legend or emphasized a dogma. And to do this it required to be

powerfully dramatic, to depict to the masses the Good and the Bad in its most graphic and forceful interpretation, so that the Nepalese artist either elevates the observer by the transcendental nature of his celestial conceptions, or terrorizes him into docility by his suggestions of purgatory. It is an art, therefore, as far as the people themselves are concerned, which inspires awe and veneration more than pleasure, and is worshipped rather than admired.

From the point of view of the æsthetic, Nepal was until a few years ago a *terra incognita*, and even now, although specimens of Newar handiwork have filtered down through the devious mountain passes from Katmandu, little is known of its general character. The examples alluded to are usually sacerdotal utensils of brass, or temple accessories, to be seen in private collections or in museums, which, removed from the religious edifices they are devised to serve, dethroned as it were from Olympus, have lost much of their sentiment and prestige, and, instead of being regarded with fear and reverence, have degenerated into



IN THE DURBAR SQUARE AT BHATGAON

The flight of steps in the foreground is guarded by five pairs of grotesque figures and animals.

objects of curiosity. Torn from their picturesque setting in shrine or temple, they are robbed of much of the *religio loci*, and now, obviously out of place, are collected in small groups " like monks turned out of their cells into the public streets." In the strange surroundings of a private room or art collection, although beautiful pieces of craftsmanship, they give but a faint conception of the unique quality of the complete art of the Newar. To understand this correctly it must be studied *in situ*, and in conjunction with the atmosphere of deep religious sincerity in which it was first nourished and developed. The original artists were upheld and stimulated by their implicit faith; they accepted the wildest legends and traditions, hence the earnest and honest nature of their compositions, a quality which still survives and is observable in a degree at the present day.

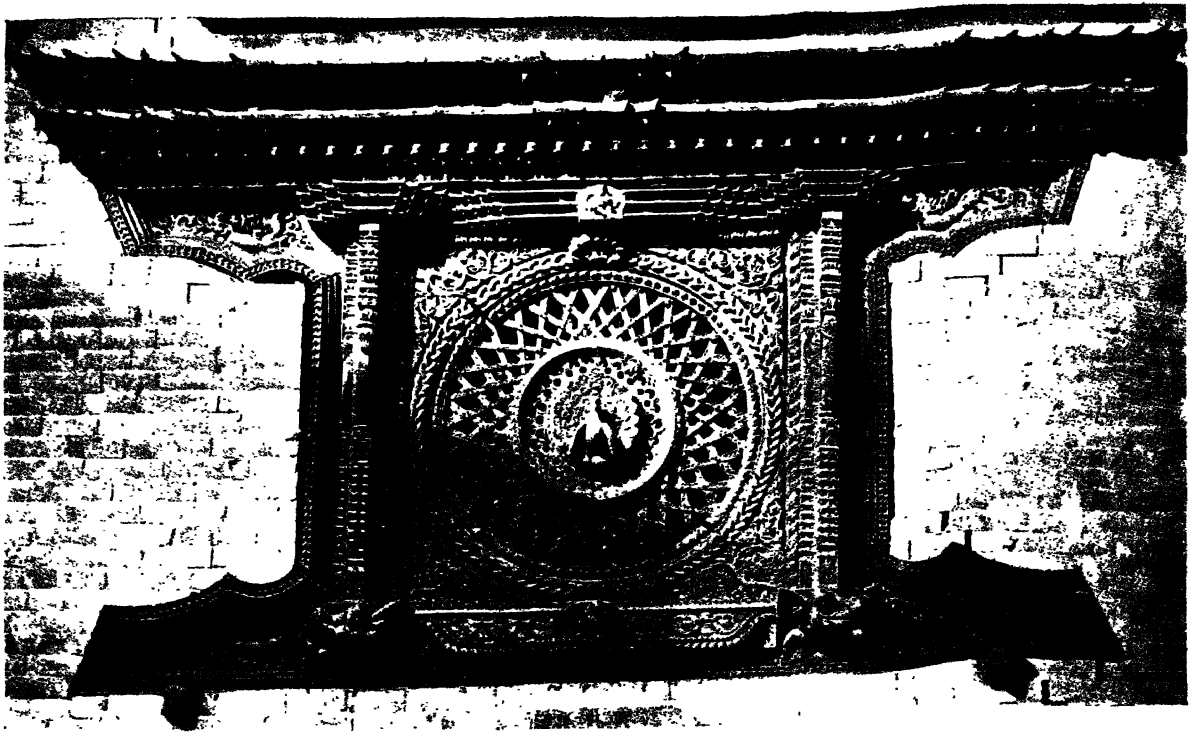
A reference has been previously made to the great religious and political storm-wave of Mohammedanism which swept over Hindustan during the " Middle Ages," and the effect this had on the institutions of the peninsula,

including that country's art. The tenets of the victorious faith not only encouraged the destruction of the Hindu temples, but regarded iconoclasm as a sacred duty. As in another instance, the order went forth to " destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire " (Deut. vii.). To correctly understand the situation in India at this period, it must be realized that the religion of the country was a Pantheism, and that the sacred edifices of the Hindus rioted in sculptured representations of the deities and their attributes, the thousand and one gods of the national creed, in all their various forms and incarnations. Natural and living creations were introduced into all ornamentation, in wood, stone, or metal, and " graven images " were the chief feature of every temple and shrine. The old religion of the Aryans was based on a worship of Nature in its most sublime aspects, and the influence of this reverence for the supreme forces is evident in their sacred art wherever it was applied. The country of Hindustan was rich in build-

ings, sheltering divinities of every shape and size, and whose decorations palpitated with the natural and floral forms so closely associated with the fundamental principles of the creed. This was the state of art in India before the Mohammedan invasion, and if it is possible to conceive the diametrical antithesis of this, the subsequent artistic condition of the country can be imagined. Not that the conquerors were blind to the æsthetic—a glance at the buildings of the Moguls at the present day will at once disprove this suggestion—but their art, as originally understood, was as far removed from that of the Hindus as the poles are asunder. For Mohammedanism brought with it all the leading convictions of that forceful cult which planted its indelible mark on the art and architecture of the world from Cordova to Canton. And in place of the unrestrained thought of the Hindu and his picturesque mythology, we have the stern conventions of Islam, and an art bound by the canons of a religion whose doctrine forbade representations of living objects, just as the early Christians abhorred the graven images

of Pagan gods. Mohammedanism, states Waddell, "is practically devoid of symbolism, and its sanctuary is a severely empty building, wholly unadorned with images or pictures." But Nepal, secure in its Himalayan fastness, remained untouched by this epoch-making current which permanently changed every aspect of the great countries with which it came into contact, and therefore its value to the student of Oriental history is incalculable. In the words of Fergusson, Nepal "presents us with a complete microcosm of India as it was in the seventh century, when Hieun Tsiang visited it—when the Buddhist and Brahmanical religions flourished side by side; and when the distinctive features of the various races were far more marked than they have since become under the powerful solvent of the Mohammedan domination."

The situation represented by the foregoing would tend to indicate that Nepal, especially the Valley, lay in a secure "pocket" in the mountains, and, entirely undisturbed, "heard the legions thunder past," but such is not exactly the case. Through the kingdom runs



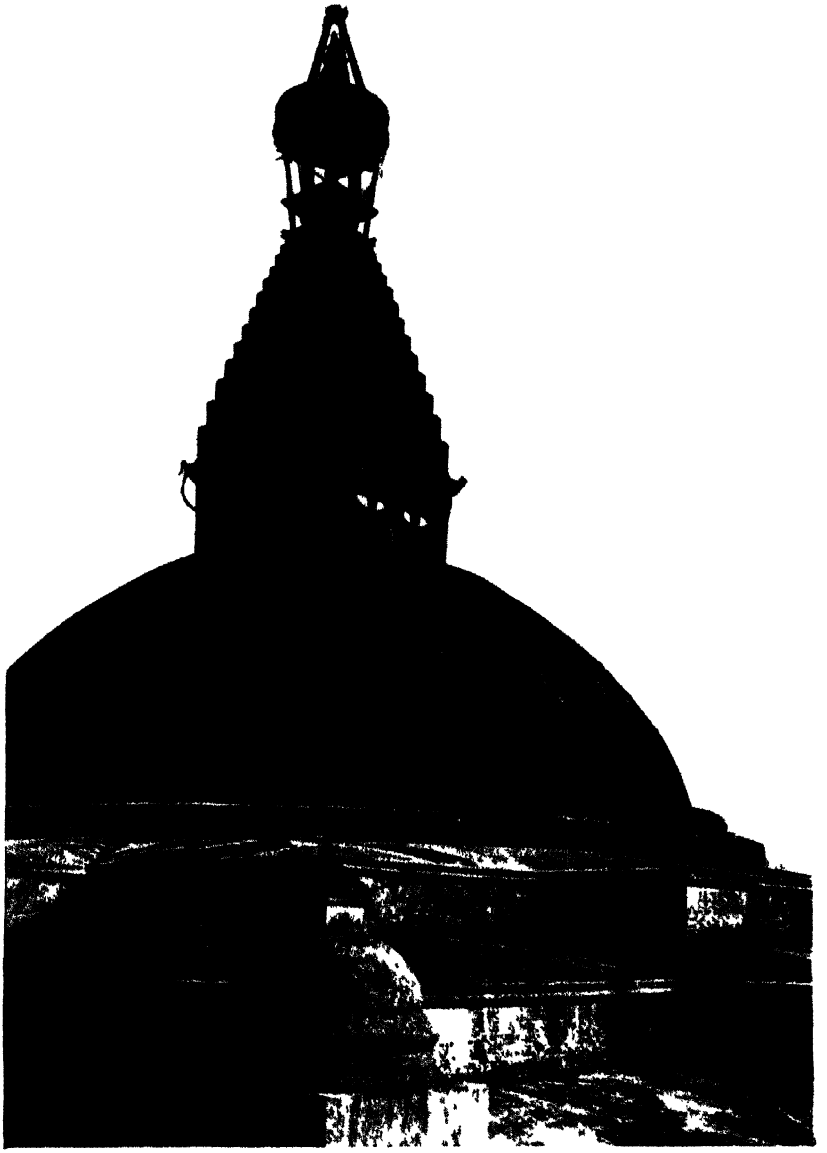
A WINDOW OF CARVED WOOD AT BHATGAON.

A peacock forms the centre, from which radiates a remarkable design of tangential bars.

one of the thoroughfares—a long and tortuous one, it is true, but nevertheless a line of communication—connecting India with the Chinese Empire. To the constant intercourse between these two different countries, and the influences at various times exercised from the one or the other, is due the general character of the architecture of Nepal. During the Buddhist period, the inhabitants of the Valley looked to India for inspiration and guidance, and the buildings of this early time are of the solid stone order, in the manner of the "Chaityās" and "Stupās" of the Great Teacher's native country. It is possible that in Nepal in the third century B.C. Asoka himself introduced this style when he visited the Valley and built the four large Buddhist temples at Patan, one opposite to each of the cardinal points of the compass. These are still in evidence at the present day, and are slightly different from those subsequently built in Nepal, as they more nearly resemble the "topes" of the country from which they originated. In other words, the Newars when accepting this Indian construction, instead

of slavishly copying it, adapted it slightly to their own ideas, and thus produced this typical architectural feature with a special character of its own. There are numerous buildings of this type in various parts of the Valley, all fundamentally Buddhist in origin, and all of an early, or comparatively early, date. They comprise what may be referred to as the " Chaitya " style of Nepalese architecture.

Side by side with these solid stone structures will be observed buildings of an entirely different nature and of a less antique appearance, but dedicated to somewhat the same religious purposes. An entire contrast to the severe form of the stupa, in design, construction, and general character, these temples present what may be termed the " Pagoda " style of architecture in the Nepal Valley. A glance at these buildings will at once reveal their origin, which is obviously Chinese in almost every particular. The explanation of the introduction of this very distinctive style, from an entirely opposite source to the " Chaitya," may be found by observing the



THE DOME OF BODHNĀTH.—*Page* 139.

course of events, both religious and political, which affected Asia during the "Middle Ages." History tells us that the establishment of Buddhism in China was contemporaneous with its decline in India, its original seat. Buddhist Nepal, no longer able to look to Hindustan for its inspirations, naturally turned to the Celestial Empire for religious impulse, where the Newar's national creed was a living fact, and becoming more powerful day by day. A parallel case is to be observed in the story of the Christian Church. The modern student of Christianity would hardly look to Jerusalem for enlightenment on the principles of this religion, and in the same way, although Kapilavastu—the Buddhist Bethlehem—is on the confines of Nepal, the whole country around lay under the sway of the Brahman, just as the Holy Land at the present time lies in the hand of the Turk. The succeeding centuries tended to still further narrow the intercourse between the Valley and Hindustan, until eventually in 1204 A.D. the disused doorway was hermetically sealed by the Mohammedan conquest of Behar and

Bengal. From this time, religiously, and in consequence æsthetically, Nepal had no real sympathies with India, and became almost unconsciously more closely associated with the great and growing Buddhist communities of Tibet and China. In these circumstances it is natural that the later temples of the Valley should show strong Chinese influences, and that the ornamentation of the two countries should display features which are most strikingly similar in motive and method of expression.

The architecture of Nepal may therefore be broadly consigned to two great styles, the "Chaitya" and the "Pagoda," but there is one other form occasionally present which may be briefly referred to. A few religious edifices are to be seen of the typically Hindu character, as found in India, and described by Fergusson as "a square tower-like temple, with a perpendicular base, but a curvilinear outline above," which this authority suggests are originally of "Daysu" or aborigine source. This style of building is, however, not common, and merely serves to indicate the spiritual

link which has at different times connected this independent State with the neighbouring Empire of Hindustan.

In the "Chaitya," or earlier and more purely Buddhist style of building, there are several interesting examples in the Valley, the two most famous being the temples of Shambu-Nāth and Bodhnāth, both situated near Katmandu. The former is the richer and more popular shrine, besides being built on a hill in a very picturesque and commanding position, but the latter, standing alone and in the centre of the open plain, has an impressive character of its own. Its main feature is the great pairs of eyes, figured high up on each face of the *toran* or square base of the spire, which gaze serenely over the smiling fields of the Valley, as they have done for a thousand years and more. For Bodhnāth is the largest and one of the oldest temples in Nepal, and before those impassive enamelled eyes has passed the ebb and flow of the country's history, its tribal battles, alien horsemen trampling down the golden grain growing up to its very wall, survivors

from a local outbreak at Katmandu a few meadows away fleeing to the Bodhnāth cells for sanctuary, and all the events which have thrilled and stirred the seething bazaars of the neighbouring capital. At the present time, in peace and security, the husbandman tills his fields under the watch and ward of this silent sentinel, while mothers point to the great gold face, and restrain their children with stories of the god who is looking down day and night at their doings, good or bad. To us, from the outside world of the twentieth century, the calm eyes seem to regard our advent with a mild stare of supercilious contempt, a mere incident in the passage of time, while we, on our part, endeavour to read some story in this inscrutable metal mask of the Buddhist Sphynx.

According to Waddell, this building is one of the most celebrated places of Lamaist pilgrimage outside Tibet. Immense numbers of Tibetans, both Lamas and laity, visit the stupa every winter, and encamp in the surrounding field for making their worship and offerings, and circumambulating the sacred

spot. Its special virtue is reputed to be its power of granting all prayers for worldly wealth, children, and everything else asked for. A copy of a printed booklet sold at this shrine to the pilgrims indicates the manner in which the building is brought into intimate relation with the chief legendary and historic persons of early Lamaism. It also states that Bodhnāth " enshrines the spirit of the Buddhas of the ten directions, and of the Buddhas of the three times (*i.e.* the present, past, and future), and of all the Bodhisats, and it holds the Dharma-kāyā."

But to properly understand the Chaitya style of Nepalese architecture, the student must toil up the steep flight of over five hundred steps leading to the gorgeous temple of Shambu-Nāth, and there examine the sacred shrine dedicated to Swayambhu Buddha—the Self-Existent. This edifice stands about a mile to the west of Katmandu, on a richly wooded detached hill, and consists of a masonry hemisphere surmounted by a *toran* and umbrella of burnished gold. The majestic size, and severe simplicity of outline of this temple, with

its gilded cone, set off by the dark garniture of woods, constitute a very beauteous composition. Ascending the stone stairway, which by its perpendicularity loses itself among the overhanging tree-tops, one emerges breathless on to the plateau at the top, where the first striking object which confronts one is a colossal metal thunderbolt of Indra, resting on a stone pedestal (*dharm-dhātu-mandal*), with representations of twelve animals in bold relief carved around it. These are said to depict the twelve months of the Tibetan year. Beyond this feature, amidst a forest of smaller structures, stands the body of the main temple —a solid dome of earth and brick about 60 feet in diameter and 30 feet in height. This supports a lofty conical spire, the top of which is crowned by a richly decorated pinnacle of copper-gilt. The square *toran* or basement of this spire is covered with plates of metal, and, like Bodhnāth, has the two eyes of Buddha, painted in crimson, white, and black colours, on each of its four sides. Springing from the tops of the four sides of the *toran* are four large pentagonal slabs or escut-

cheons, also of copper-gilt, on each of which are riveted five metal figures of the Dyāni Buddhas. Round the base of the hemisphere, and built partly into its plinth, are five large shrines, four of them facing the cardinal points of the compass. They are plated with copper-gilt, and each contains a metal figure of a Buddha rather larger than life-size. The whole design is, of course, supremely emblematic, and fully bears out the axiom that those people who are endowed with artistic sense tend to clothe their religion with symbolism. The cone or pyramid surmounting the dome is divided into thirteen tiers, and is typical of the thirteen Budhisatwa heavens of Buddhist cosmography. Above this is a finial in the form of an umbrella, the whole of which represents the highest heaven, or that of Adi Buddha. The five spokes of the umbrella refer to the abodes of the five Dharma Buddhas, while the great eyes on the *toran* signify omniscience.

Such is a bald description of this wonderful monument, but no account can do justice to the wealth of art, colour, and Oriental feeling with which this temple is surrounded,

and its romantic position. With the Valley interlaced by its rivers, and the city of Katmandu shimmering below, it presents a picture full of interest and beauty. To the student of art this collection of shrines and temples, encrusted with carved ornament and metal figures, is a complete museum of the æsthetic handiwork of a golden age when priest and craftsman collaborated in the glorification of their gods. Signs of earnest belief in the national faith are in strong evidence at this popular shrine, and indications of religion, being an important part of the life of the people, are not wanting at any hour of the day. Groups of brightly clad Newars, and their still more gaily dressed womenfolk, are constantly moving about among the carved lotus pillars and metal images, circumambulating the great Chaitya, or paying their respects to the image of some favourite saint, while the droning of the priestly ritual near the "holy of holies" is never silent. At this sacred spot is an upper room, "dark to all the world," except for one small pale blue lambent flame floating on a surface of oil, "just as the light of Adi Buddha



THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SHAMBU-NĀTH.—*Page* 142.

in its lotus-shrine floated in days of yore on the surface of the lake of Naga Vasa." The opening verse of Buddhist philosophy says, "Know that when, in the beginning, all was perfect void and the five elements were not, then Adi Buddha, the stainless, was revealed in the form of flame or light," and the similarity to the first verses of another Holy Script is somewhat remarkable. The flame at Shambu-Nath is this sacred and everlasting light, regarded as a symbol of the Supreme Deity, and is believed originally to have been derived from heaven. It is popularly supposed to be perpetual and never, since the beginning of time, to have been extinguished.

Of the age and history of this great building there is nothing really authentic, except records of restorations commencing from the sixteenth century, but tradition relates that the first Chaitya was built by Gorades, a raja of Nepal, between two and three thousand years ago.

A more joyous style of Nepalese architecture than the Chaitya is the "pagoda," whose fantastic forms and rippling golden roofs are

found in great exuberance all over the Valley. These buildings may be regarded as more essentially characteristic of Nepal than the foregoing, and, not only in composition and construction, but also in detail, show their decided far-eastern origin. The richest and most remarkable example of a Nepalese pagoda is without doubt the temple of Changu-Narain, while the most dignified and monumental is the Nyatpola Deval or "Temple of Five stories." It is interesting to note that the latter has its almost exact counterpart in the Pagoda of Horinje in Japan, constructed at least ten centuries earlier than the Bhatgaon building, but both edifices are obviously based on the same architectonic principles originally derived from China. Almost every street and square in the Valley produces one or more of these quaint edifices, and some of the smaller pagodas are complete specimens on a miniature scale of this fanciful style of Nepalese architecture. It has already been indicated that the pagoda does not pretend to rival in antiquity the Chaitya, as none of these buildings date earlier than the



DOORWAY OF A SMALL TEMPLE AT BHATGAON

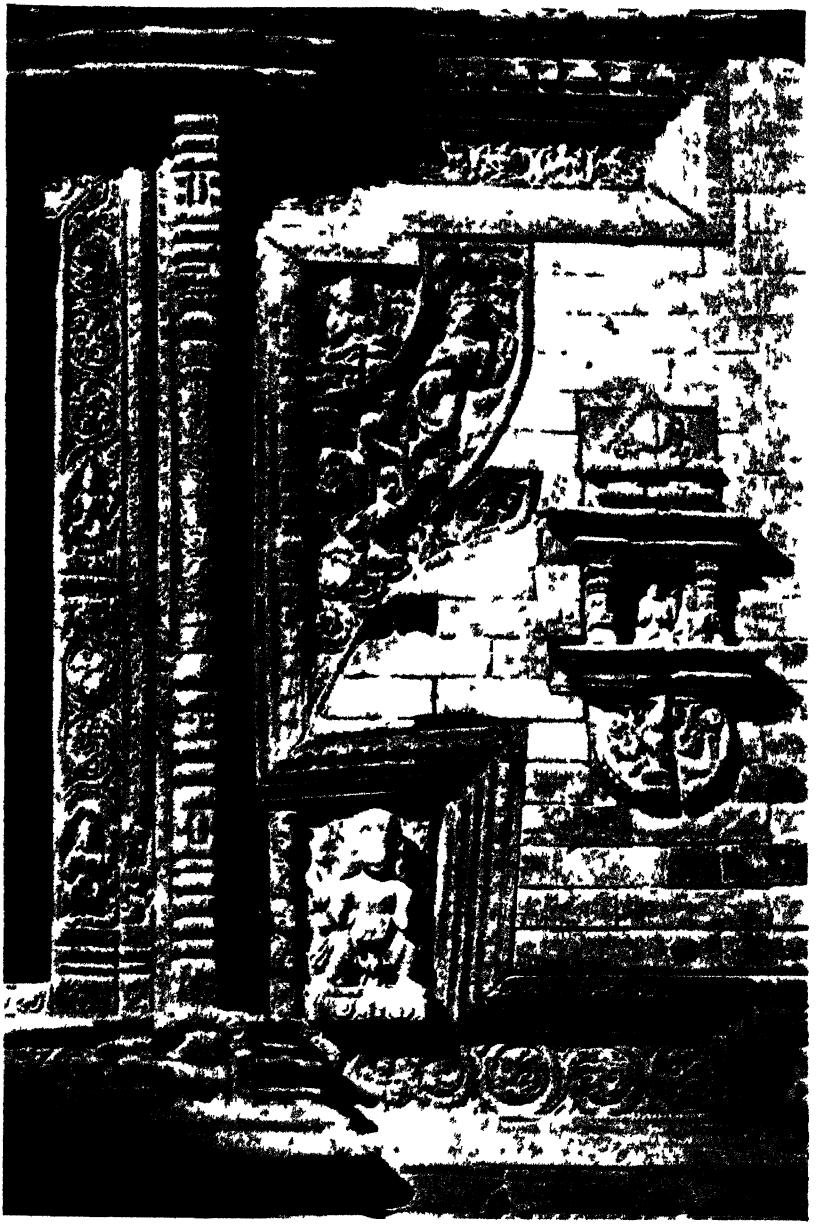
fifteenth century, but the method of construction utilized in these edifices is, without doubt, based on forms of a very early period. The suggestion has been made that they reproduce many features directly traceable to the primitive wooden erections of India, which preceded the ancient structures of stone. Apart from the Japanese prototype already alluded to, there is an authentic document preserved containing a reference to a "tower" of nine stories which excited the admiration of a Chinese envoy to Nepal towards the middle of the sixth century. Sylvain Levi is inclined to believe that the pagoda design, ordinarily accepted as of Chinese invention, was a form common in India previous to the Mohammedan invasion, and concludes this theory with the pregnant sentence, "Le Nepal, ici encore, est l'image authentique d'une Inde disparue." On the other hand, Fergusson's researches indicate that the pagoda, whether of Burma, Nepal, or Siam, had undoubtedly a common origin, and that it is probably in China this must be looked for, but information on this aspect of Asiatic art is surprisingly meagre.

While on this subject, however, a reference must be made to a remarkable design over an archway in the Nan-kau Pass near Pekin, having the well-ascertained date of 1345 A.D., and it is interesting to observe identically the same motif employed over the door of the Durbar at Bhatgaon, constructed nearly four centuries later, the two buildings being in a direct line 2000 miles apart. By this and other signs it appears evident that some centuries ago there was a closer intercourse between the various countries of the Far East than is even observable at the present day, and the main impetus which produced this communication was a desire for interchange of religious ideas. Art naturally followed in the immediate wake of this movement—records of artists being sent for from one country to another are not rare in the "Middle Ages" of the East, and it is therefore not difficult to account for examples of decoration and architecture which are geographically far apart bearing distinct evidences of a common source of derivation. The pagoda is one of these interesting features,

and a clue to the origin of this characteristically Buddhist construction may certainly be forthcoming in the Valley of Nepal. As developed by the Newar builders, the design of the pagoda is comparatively simple, and needs but little description. The plan is ordinarily square, and the ground floor is generally the only one put to any practical use, the upper floors, which may be several in number, being often "blind stories." The lower room, built on a stone plinth, is the chamber of the temple, or sanctuary of the deity, and contains little but the idol and a few religious accessories. Outside, however, this room is sometimes lavishly decorated by the artistic contributions of individuals desirous of showing their devotion in a practical manner. Naturally there is no preconceived plan in connection with these voluntary decorations, but, like some of our Gothic cathedrals which were added to on somewhat the same principle, the general effect is singularly picturesque. Above this careless profusion of ornament arises the red-tiled roof of the sanctuary chamber, and surmounting this are progressive

stories, which go up to make the pagoda form. The roof of the highest of these is plated with copper-gilt, and the whole is crowned by a gilt finial and umbrella. The individuals who subscribe to the support of the temple or shrine seem to vie with one another in their donations of artistic accessories, and it is not unusual to see in very richly endowed edifices one dragon or banner placed in front of another in the order in which these objects have been received by the custodian of the building. A very attractive addition to the gilded roof of the pagoda is a kind of pendant escutcheon of embossed metal hanging from the pinnacle over the eave, and which can only be described as bearing a strong resemblance to an ancient watch-fob of giant proportions. But the effect of this conception, bearing in its centre a medallion with the particular divinity worshipped at the shrine, hammered out in high relief, is opulent in the extreme.

Although the pagoda is embellished with much decoration that is pre-eminently symbolic, it does not appear that the general



DETAILS OF A TEMPLE DOORWAY AT BHALGAON

design of the building has the fanciful emblematic meanings which the Buddhist religion has associated with the various architectural elements composing the Chaitya. The umbrella, or attribute of royalty, usually surmounts the whole, but the different parts of the construction do not constitute an allegory as in the older and more classic style of Newar architecture.

CHAPTER X

THE ARTS OF THE NEWARS—*Continued*

The Nepalese School—Its Origin and Influences—Metal-work—Metal Statuary—The Process of Manufacture—The Artist-priest—Minor Metal-work—The *Makara*—Religious Utensils—Wood-carving—Terra-cotta—Stone-carving—Textiles.

IT does not need a very close investigation of the architecture of Nepal, both religious and secular, to realize that the Newars were a wonderfully artistic people. The temples and public buildings reveal such a wealth of fine and applied art that it is clear the inhabitants of the Valley from a very early period possessed a keen appreciation of the æsthetic. This admirable trait in the Newar national character appears to have been instinctive, while at the same time both their religions and their rulers seem to have fostered and encouraged this feeling for art to its fullest



METAL STATUE OF RAJA BHUPATINDRA MALL, TUKBAK SQUARE, BHATGAON.—*Pages* 71, 156

extent. The result of this favourable combination of circumstances is that Nepal may lay claim to have eventually developed a distinctive art of its own, in other words, a Nepalese school of art. Although the original principles adopted by this school may have emanated from India, owing to its geographical position Nepalese art flourished long after the parent school had ceased to exist; in fact, it may be said to have lasted almost into modern times. Ancient records indicate that one of the largest and most important institutions for the propagation of Buddhist learning was situated at Nalanda, now but a waste of ruins south of Patna in Bengal. This university was maintained in great strength for the first five centuries of our era, and occupied its staff of 10,000 priests and neophytes in disseminating every aspect of Buddhist thought. There is good reason to believe that this celebrated monastery was one of the main sources from which Buddhist Asia drew its religious inspirations in the early years of the creed. The powerful influence exerted by this "depository of learning" would not take long to

reach the neighbouring country of Nepal, where every condition was in favour of its reception, both in its spiritual and artistic form. A survey of the Buddhist art of the Far East goes far towards demonstrating that on the decay of this Bengal university, due to the decline of the Buddhist faith in India, Nepal kept the torch burning, and became one centre from which the Law in its pictorial form was communicated to the followers of this doctrine in other lands. Tibet, a country which accepted the faith at a much later date, employed Nepalese artists to prepare its temple pictures and to produce its sacred statuary, while from distant China ancient art is forthcoming which displays in its details an intimate association with the Nepal school of Buddhist art. The design on the archway from Pekin, mentioned in the previous chapter, with its *Garudas*, *Nagas*, and *Makaras*, elements obviously Hindu in origin, travelled from India *via* Nepal, while there are specimens of Bodhisattva figures from China, which are conceived in the same spirit as the metal statues devised by the Newars. It is only fair to add that

where these countries borrowed they also returned, and both China and Tibet reciprocated by an interchange of artistic ideas. A curious example of this may be observed on a temple in the city of Patan, where a conventional representation of a bat occupies a prominent position in the doorway. It had no significance to the Newars, but in China it is a punning emblem of happiness. This, however, is only one incident, although an interesting one, but to the students of the arts of the Orient, the work of the Newars may be said to illustrate an incomplete story, the missing chapters of which await their scribe.

The highest forms of Nepalese art are represented by two different methods of expression—painted pictures and metal statuary. In the Valley itself, for reasons which are not quite clear, specimens of the former craft are not numerous, although the State Library at Katmandu possesses a small collection which is most instructive. It demonstrates that in the art of picture-painting the old artist-priests of the Valley produced work of a very fine order, and this was no doubt the foundation

on which was built the better-known banner-painting of the Tibetan monasteries. But it was in the plastic arts, especially in their manipulation of metals, that the Newar craftsmen excelled, and it is this aspect of the æsthetic that gave Nepal in the old days its artistic reputation. The sculptured portraits of its nobles, the life-size statues of its kings, the dignified bas-reliefs of its saints, and the noble conceptions of its gods, executed in hammered brass or cast copper, show, besides a profound knowledge of artistic principles, an earnestness of purpose, and intensity of feeling, which must impress all who see this work at its best. A study of the Newar's handiwork in this direction will reveal an acquaintance with the best traditions of his subject; and an attainment of a superior plane of art work, which give the productions of this comparatively small country a more than ordinary interest.

To properly appreciate the art of the Newar metal-worker, one must see a statue in copper-gilt of a Newar king on his high stone column, surrounded sometimes by a group of smaller

members of his family, and in the picturesque architectural setting of the Durbar square. Seated or kneeling, in a dignified attitude, usually with hands clasped, from the height of his monumental pillar he gazes down calmly and serenely on the city that he ruled, and on the temples that he caused to be built. It is doubtful whether any country in the world has conceived a more artistic memorial statue than those to be observed in the public squares of the cities of Nepal. The well-proportioned stone pillar, some 40 feet in height, severe in its simplicity, stands firmly on the flagged pavement supported by a solid stone base. Surmounting this is a lotus capital—the symbol of purity and divine birth—and around this is entwined a snake, the emblem of eternity. Then comes the massive throne of metal-gilt, on the back of embossed lions, elephants, and dragons, bound together by boldly executed foliage, among the conventional branches of which sport animals, birds, and fishes, each having its special attribute. The statue is shaded and protected by a golden umbrella, hung with little tongues of metal which tinkle

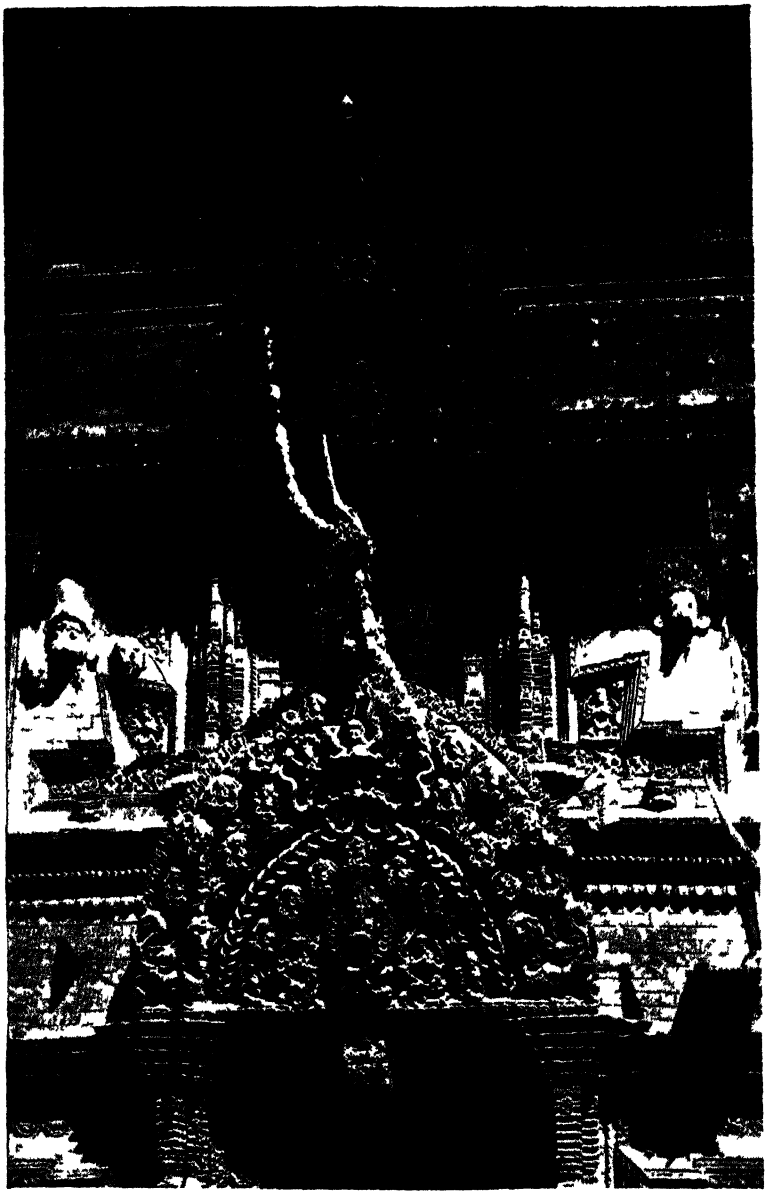
in the breeze; or it may have a canopy of Naga snakes or huge cobras, whose expanded hoods form an ideal background to the whole. Here and there to give lightness to the conception a metal bird or reptile is poised, standing out from the remainder of the design, a little touch of delicate art-feeling which indicates that the maker of these statues was an artist to his finger-tips. The Newar metal-worker played with his stubborn material as a modeller manipulates clay with his fingers, and the ease with which he twisted and turned his copper or brass, and chased the little figure on its surface or applied the flower-bud there and the lizard here, indicates the thought of the master-mind and the touch of the master-hand. Much of the distinctive character in this work lies in the freedom in which the metal is handled, and the combination of the two different processes of hammering and casting in the same artistic composition. The Newar craftsman conceived his design, and proceeded in the most workmanlike manner to materialize it in the metals at his command, melting, embossing, and riveting the various

portions, separately forging the dagger, chasing the bracelet, and engraving the finger-ring, thus building the whole up according to his approved original idea. The result of this is a work of art which will stand every test, and is perfectly satisfying in all respects. The figure itself, regarded as a portrait, is broadly treated, and seems to reproduce the general character of the sitter, while the features appear to have been studied from life, but conventionalized in order to be in conformity with the entire scheme.

Apart from these public statues which adorn the streets and squares of the cities, the courtyards of the temples often contain portrait figures in metal, of people of lesser degree, works of considerable artistic merit and no little interest. They represent founders or benefactors of the sacred edifice, and vary in size according to the practical interest these bygone individuals have shown in its foundation. In front of the principal entrance to the shrine may generally be seen a large group, often protected by a substantial cage of forged iron, so closely constructed as to

cause an investigation of its contents a matter of no little difficulty. These are the portraits of the founder and his wife, and are regarded by all with great respect, almost approaching worship. In some few cases these are actually saints or deities, but the ordinary custom is to place in front of the shrine metal images of the distinguished laity who have been intimately identified with its establishment. Around these are grouped smaller statues, also portraits, and in front of each is a shallow receptacle for incense or oil and wick. These are likenesses of those who have contributed their moiety to the glorification or upkeep of the temple, or depict devotees who have dedicated a figure, a bell, or some sacred utensil, to be added to its furniture.

The method employed by the Newar in building up his larger statues is a somewhat unusual one, as he obtains his result by the combination of two distinct technical processes. His smaller work is cast in the well-known *cire-perdue* manner, literally, the "lost wax," and technically, the "waste mould," method of casting. Parts of his larger con-

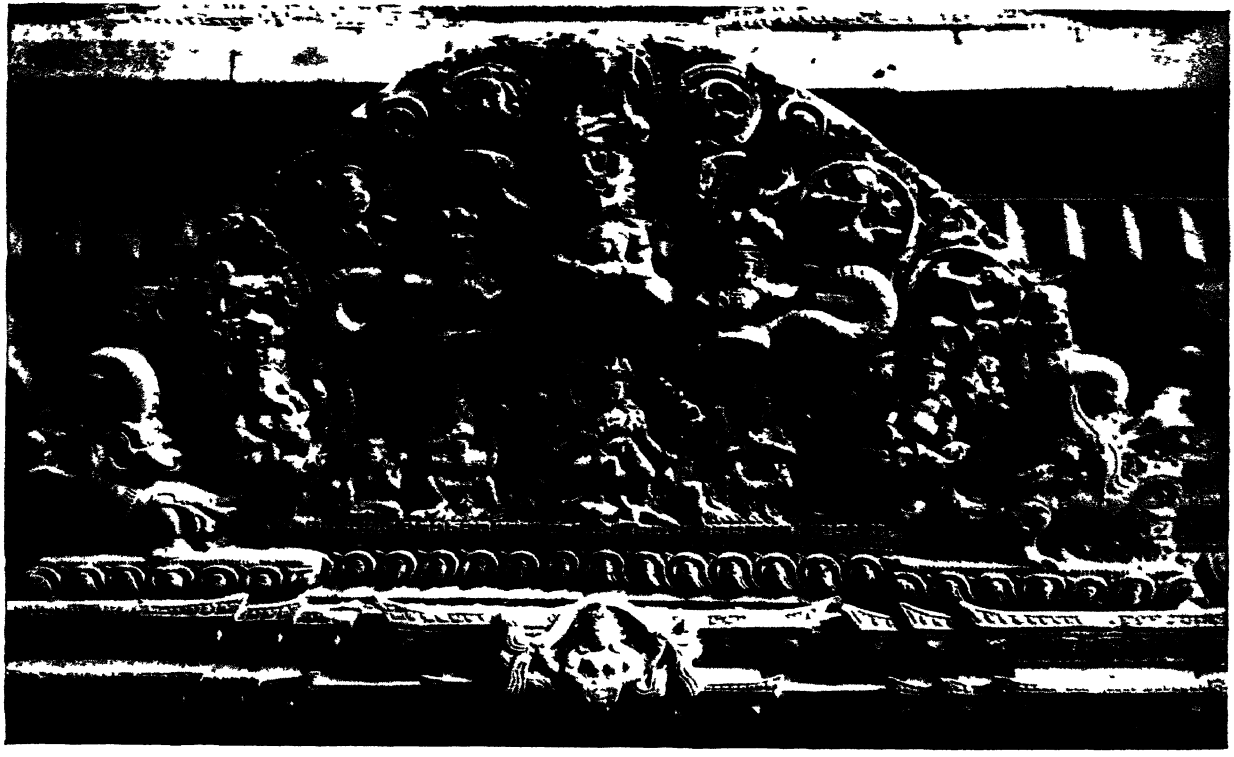


ELABORATE WOOD CARVING ON BHAIRAV TEMPLE AT BHATGAON.

ceptions, such as the head and hands, are also executed in the same way, but the body and lower portions of seated figures are constructed by being beaten up into the desired form with the hammer. The various portions on being completed in one or other of these processes are joined together by rivets, and the figure built up and finished in this manner. The accessories have been manufactured separately — the head-dress and ornaments, the symbols and insignia—and these are added subsequently. It is customary for many of the statues to be encrusted with jewels and gems, and special places are reserved for their introduction. These finishing touches of real rubies, turquoises, amethysts, and other precious stones, add considerably to the richness of the general effect, and although suggesting the barbaric, the *tout ensemble* does not suffer, for they fall into place, and do not detract from the work of art as a whole.

The foregoing refers to the more realistic work of the old Nepali artist, but for his ideal conceptions one must turn to the statues of his deities placed in the niches of his temples.

These represent all the varied creations of the Hindu pantheon, and also the many mystical incarnations of the Buddha. In size they vary from the small figures found in considerable numbers and riveted on every available space in front of the shrine, to the large, almost life-size, statues grouped around the inner sanctuaries of the temples. Some of the former are metal miniatures of beautiful workmanship, while the latter are broadly treated creations exhibiting a most profound knowledge of the best principles of sculpture, and a control of the material used, which at once commands admiration. The religious sentiment expressed by this statuary is very real, and indicates the artist's whole-hearted belief in his faith, as well as a complete confidence in his craftsmanship. It is the spontaneous result of a genuinely religious feeling—the birthright of the Newar sculptor—just as his art formed part of his nature, and the result is a noble conception imbued with all the best traditions of his creed. In regarding this work of the Newar, and, in fact, all the fine arts of the East, it is



WOOD CARVING OVER DOORWAY AT KATMANDU.

necessary that the academic test as ordinarily applied to occidental art should be discarded and his sculpture viewed from another standpoint. This point of view is not always readily taken up, but when obtained, the beauty and emotional character of the productions of the Nepalese school of art will be appreciated at their true value. The earnest beliefs of the Newar artist-priest were materialized in his painting and sculpture; he moulded his best thoughts into concrete forms, and they became the deities of his temples; in stone and metal he realized his ideals, and the influence of his religion was communicated to all who respected and reverenced his art.

In the lower flights of his artistic fancy the Newar metal-worker has also recorded some very fascinating ideas, and his guardian lions or aggressive dragons placed in front of his buildings are often very spirited in feeling. Some of these for size alone are fine pieces of workmanship, and show the Newar to be a thoroughly honest craftsman, proud of his skill. His purely ornamental effects are, moreover, freely designed, and display a love

of nature and a fondness for floral forms which are in keeping with the temples they serve to decorate. Flowers are a great feature of the Newar ritual, as they are of most religions of the East. A quotation from an old work, attributed to the Prophet Mahomet, and often referred to by followers of other creeds, may explain one of the reasons of this—

"If you happen to possess one pice
Keep it for buying your daily bread;
But if you are the fortunate possessor of two,
Then spend half to buy a flower.

The fruits and rice sold in the bazaar
Are only to pacify our bodily wants;
But a flower will pacify the Thirst of the Soul,
And it is the only nectar in this Universe."

Conventional foliage, enriched with well-known flowers, and also fruits, is found reproduced in metal and wood on many parts of the sacred buildings of Nepal. Introduced among these floral forms, which may be based on the lotus, the mango, or the pomegranate, are many sacred signs and emblems, each telling its story, or referring to some traditional incident of the past. Each piece of construction has its long and beautiful meaning, and every combination of forms is based on

some legend known to all true followers of the creed. There are also strange shapes of mythical creatures always displayed in association with one another or in connection with certain architectural features, some of which have a complete history of their own. Such are the "Garuda," the vehicle of Vishnu; "Kirti Muka," the "Face of Glory"; the "Makara" or dolphin, and many others of equally wide interest. The "Makara," a fabulous fish or shark, very often depicted with a curling trunk like an elephant, cunningly incorporated with conventional foliage, is found in a thousand different forms on the buildings of Nepal, usually forming a finishing element at the lower corner of the tympanums over doorways or windows. It is invariably converted into an ornamental spout for drinking water, and is seen wherever a fountain or well has been constructed, the large open mouth with the spiral proboscis proving an ideal outlet for the water. A spirited specimen terminating in a magnificent foliated scroll and executed in copper may be observed in one of the squares of Bhatgaon, the design,

drawing, modelling, and technique of which are equal to any Italian acanthus of the best period. But this is only one specimen of hundreds. The Makara is said to be the vehicle of Varuna, the god of the ocean, and is also borne on the banner of the god of love. It represents the sign of Capricornus in the Hindu zodiac, and is a feature in Asiatic art of all countries and all ages. In Bengal this strange decorative animal may be identified in many buildings dating from the third century A.D. to the thirteenth, and in edifices of the latter century it is also observable in China. Tibet, Southern India, and Ceylon have also utilized this universal element in the art of the varying periods, and it was employed in the most profuse manner in Java during the ninth and tenth centuries of this era. Van Erp states that it is " the favourite motive of Central Javanese–Hindu art. It is found everywhere, a thousand times repeated, and on structural parts which lend themselves in any degree to its application. It occurs on staircase stringers, as a border, in frames, niches, gateways, in crown pieces and



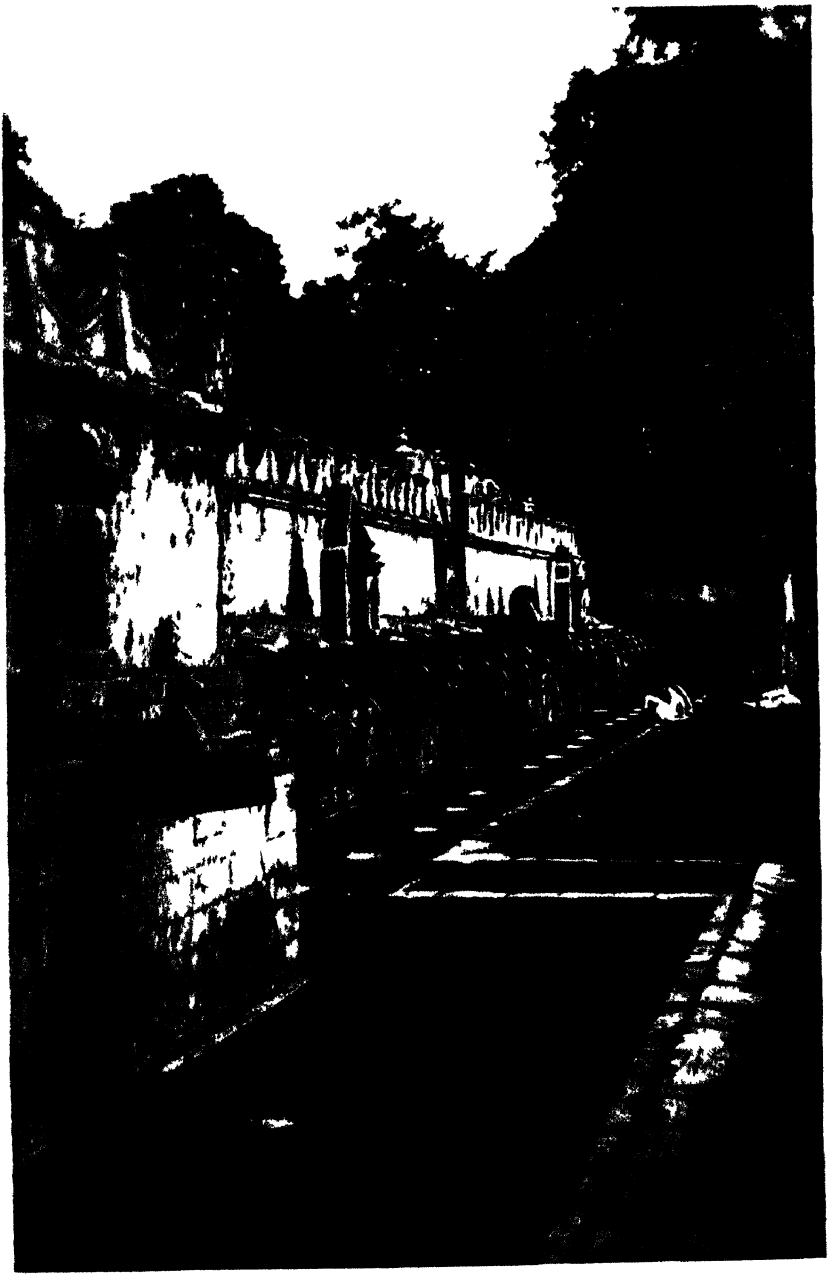
STEPS OF THE NYATTOLA DEVAL, OR TEMPLE OF THE FIVE STAGES, AT BHATGAON.

The lowest of these colossal statues are two wrestlers the historic giants of the Newars, supposed to have ten times the strength of ordinary men.

antefixes, etc. In addition to these architectural uses, it plays an important part in ornamentation in the like applications." And the same remarks may be made with regard to its introduction into all forms of Newar art, where this element of hoary antiquity and wide usage may be perceived in almost every building in the Valley. To continue the above quotation, the Makara " is part of one of the most interesting, but at the same time one of the most complex archæological problems, the complete history of which it has not yet been possible to write." The Garuda, the Naga, the Hansa (goose), the Kirti Muka, and scores of other forms in Oriental art all have their own deep meaning and attractive story, an investigation of which, like the Makara, would open up an interesting and illuminating field of research.

It is not possible to deal with Nepal metalwork without a reference to that aspect of the art by which it is best known, namely, the temple furniture. Lamps, hanging, standard, and branched, perforated incense burners, ricebowls, and ewers in every conceivable form,

are utilized largely in connection with the Newar ritual, whether of Vishnu or Buddha, and many of these have found their way into art collections of the West. The *panas*, or standard lamp, is one of the most characteristic of these, and is often designed on very graceful lines. Its moulded and patterned stand, sometimes with a dragon sprawling over it, is generally beautifully proportioned, and the superimposed composition of Ganesh or other deity framed in foliage gives an ideal finish to the whole. The common hanging lamp is also a cleverly designed article, whether it is of the "dragon" or "pagoda" type, and some of these when elaborated are exceptionally artistic pieces of metalwork. A very pleasing object is what may be termed a ewer-lamp, a kind of metal jug with an extension of the lip, in which is kept the oil and wick. An ornamental spoon accompanies it, often surmounted with a peacock, and this is utilized in ladling the oil out of the ewer-reservoir into the expanded lip, when the lamp is to be lighted. These temple accessories are many in number, and all tend to show that the



FOUNTAINS IN THE GARDEN AT BAIAJI.—*Page* 179.

Newar metalworker brought the same artistic feeling into play in his small creations as in his large figure compositions.

Of what may be termed the minor arts of Nepal, that of the worker in wood is the most important, and in his productions this craftsman has been even more prolific than the metalworker. But he has rarely if ever aspired to statuary in this material, although his caryatid struts are at times such wonderful figure groups that they may almost be classed as fine art. But regarded broadly the Newar woodworker has subordinated his handiwork and utilized it mainly in conjunction with the architect, so that his conceptions come within the category of the applied arts. In his carved tympanums—those large characteristic panels applied over all Nepali doorways—the woodworker has been allowed considerable latitude, and these features are often complete pictures, religious subjects sculptured out of wood, and treated with a freedom which adds not a little to their charm. The motive of these "overdoors," whether in wood or in metal, is ordinarily the same general idea—a story in the

centre depicting a mythological incident, or a pictorial arrangement of various deities, while around the whole in high relief is displayed a kind of traditional convention of Garuda, Makara, Nagas, and ornament, nearly always composed on the same general lines. A picturesque detail, and one on which the Newar woodcarver delighted to show his skill and versatility, is the afore-mentioned roof-strut, supporting the wide overhanging eaves of the pagodas. The broad roofs of these buildings naturally threw deep shadows, and the duty of breaking up this dark mass with some light and graceful design was left to the artistic devices of this craftsman. This individual conceived the idea of converting these constructive elements into figures of deities provided with many arms, and the problem was solved in a most satisfactory manner. The light catches on these fanciful figures with their outspread arms, and the heavy appearance of this shadow is at once corrected, and an artistic and picturesque effect attained. But this is only one of the many clever contrivances invented by the Newar woodworker

to overcome constructive difficulties of a like nature. That useful element in sound building, the wooden lintel, is a special characteristic of Nepalese architecture, and the decorative treatment of this forms an important feature of the style. A masonry composed of a good red brick flashed with a kind of half glaze, and bound with beams of *sal* timber, is the manner in which the builder carried out his work in the days of the Newar kings, and over this sensible solid framework the metal and wood worker were allowed to bring their artistic fancies into play, with a result in every sense satisfying. This structural device of the lintel, as used in connection with the doors and windows, gives the buildings of Nepal their distinctive character, and the particular beam above and below the window, treated in the Newar manner, is the keynote of the whole design. Foliated and elaborated, moulded and corbelled, this constructive element was the joy of the woodcarver, who brought all his artistic energies to bear on its embellishment. The consequence is that the window, in Nepalese buildings, has rarely

received more ornate treatment in the history of art, and in the decoration of this single feature the Newar has proved himself a versatile designer and a finished craftsman. To add to its richness, he has also devoted his cunning to devising innumerable patterns of lattice-work with which to fill in the open space of the window, and a study of these alone is a field in itself. The screen-like effect is obtained by dovetailing together small pieces of wood, and the variety of combinations produced by the Nepal workman is endless. It is, of course, the *mushrebiyeh* of Cairo and the *pinjra* of the Punjab, but the patterns in the windows of the Newar houses are considerably more elaborate than those designed by the Arab or the Sikh. This very attractive form of window screen, enabling the occupant to " see and not to be seen," is ordinarily supposed to have been invented by the Mussulman, with a view to securing air combined with privacy in his *zenana*, but the exuberance of this lattice-work in Nepal indicates its possible origin in a country where the Crescent was never carried. Owing to the

method of construction the patterns employed in this art are fundamentally geometrical, but the Newar has been able to add foliated forms to these, and, by superimposing floral shapes in wood and metal, has carried this joinery to its utmost limit. A living interest is still taken in this effective form of lattice-work, and one special design on a building in Bhatgaon is pointed out with pride to this day as the only specimen of its kind in the whole of Nepal.

In conjunction with the carved woodwork, moulded brick and modelled terra-cotta is often found, the eave-mouldings and water-courses over the doors and windows being generally constructed in this manner. The builder used an exceptionally good quality of clay, and by means of a system of firing which produced a hard, smooth, shell-like surface, his masonry seems to defy all weathers, besides displaying a most artistic colouring. But apart from these structural features, terra-cotta is used freely for purely decorative purposes. The tympanum, which is found over most important doorways, usually of hammered

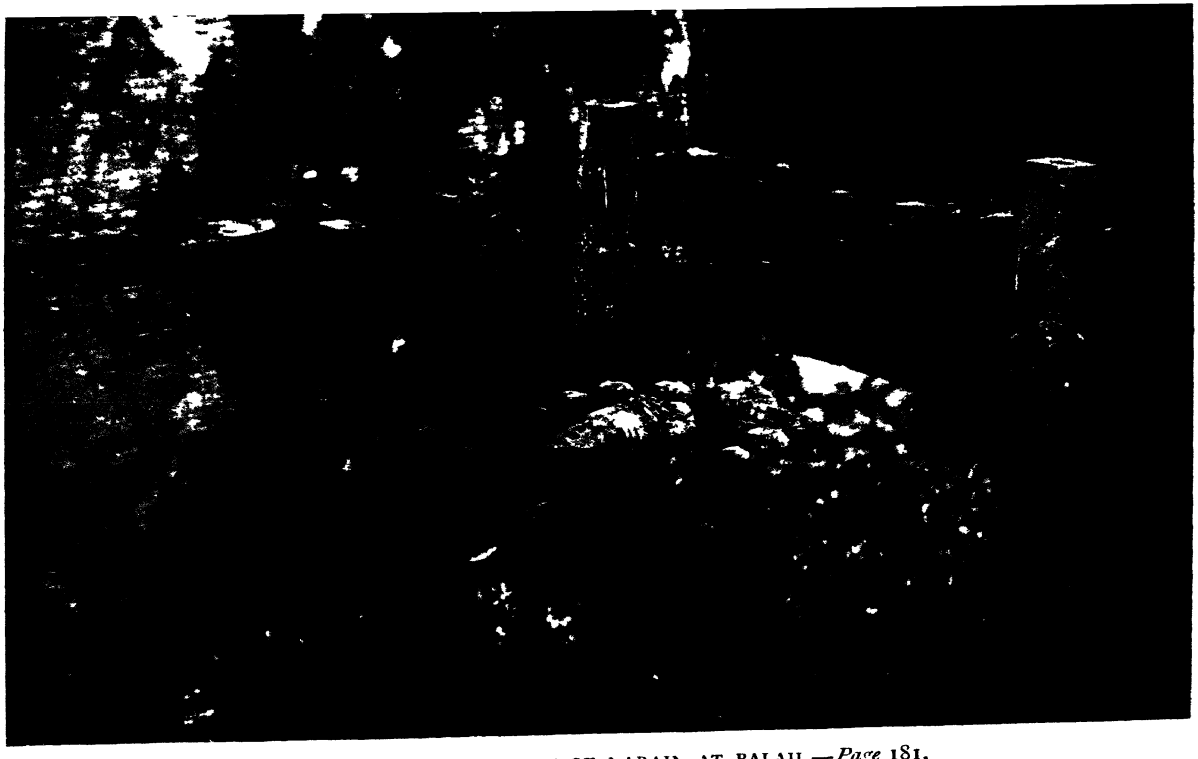
brass or carved wood, is in cases boldly executed in burnt clay with the details sharply modelled in this plastic material. Niches with figures, dragons, and foliage, running borders of snakes, finials of crowing cocks, and all the ornamental additions characteristic of a brick architecture are to be observed, while one curious accessory to many of the temples, also in terra-cotta, smacks not a little of Celestial influence. This is a small figure of an elephant, spiritedly modelled in clay, and usually placed in a position occupied by a flower-pot, for out of a hole in its broad back sprout bulbous plants, displaying a most quaint effect. Terra-cotta is sometimes used in place of wood or metal for the sake of economy, and in place of the metal lamp hanging in front of a building, this takes the form of a similar article in burnt clay, exactly the same design being followed by the potter in his material as employed by the metal-worker in producing his brass casting.

Except in a few instances, the stone-carving of the Newar craftsman is not quite of the high quality as shown in his wood and metal

work. For some reason, which is not immediately evident, he did not seem at home in this material, and usually his figures are archaic in character, his dragons limp and wanting in vigour, while his ornament is heavy, and lacks feeling. His architecture, when executed in stone, is not so open to these adverse criticisms, the various features such as the columns, capitals, mouldings, and niches being executed in an artistic and workmanlike manner, but the higher flights of fancy, as for instance his figure-work, compare unfavourably with his pictorial ideas expressed in other mediums. Nevertheless, in some examples this material has been very cleverly manipulated, a frieze continued around two stories of a temple in the Patan Durbar, and representing in lithic pictures a complete epitome of one of the Hindu epics, being a wonderful piece of stone-carving in miniature, and there are a few others almost its equal.

In textiles Nepal is singularly deficient, and except for the common cloth of the country, little or no weaving is undertaken. Certain

woven and embroidered fabrics find their way into Nepal, but they are obviously of Chinese or Tibetan origin, and it does not seem that the Newars were ever in sympathy with this art. The more masculine materials of wood and metal were the favourite mediums of this craftsman, and with these he has left records in the Nepal Valley which show that he was one of the most gifted artists of his time.



THE SUBMERGED STATUE OF NARAIN AT BALAJI.—*Page* 181.

The head which alone rises above the gently flowing waters is surrounded by a canopy of snakes heads.

CHAPTER XI

SKETCHES

The Water-Garden of Balaji—Fishponds and Fountains—The submerged Narain—Lamaism—The "Unko Vihar"—The High-priest—Gambling—The Day of Gifts.

THE useful and refreshing qualities of good water in a hot country were not overlooked by the Newars, and wells, fountains, tanks, and watercourses abound in the villages and towns of the Valley. Some of these are of great antiquity, and a public fountain in Katmandu bears an inscription which indicates that it was built in the first part of the seventh century. Each city has several small artificial tanks, sunk in the vicinity of the various *tols* (squares), approached by flights of steps, and containing *makara* spouts, from which water continually flows. Similar arrangements are also met with by the road-

side, and usually with some attribute of a presiding deity keeping watch and ward over the site. The most magnificent display of fountains is to be seen, however, at the "water-garden" of Balaji, situated about 2½ miles outside Katmandu, at the foot of a spur of the surrounding mountains now maintained in its primitive state as a royal game preserve. Here is a fine spring of water, which, gushing out of the hillside, is collected in a number of beautifully clear ornamental ponds, grouped about the terraced grounds of this delightful pleasaunce. Against a dark green background of bamboos, the crystal water in the grey stone tanks reflecting every hue, is a refreshing sight to the traveller, heated with his dry and dusty journey along the road from Katmandu, and the rippling waters overflowing from one terrace to another seem to invite him to stay and rest.

"Oh, blessed shades; Oh, gentle cool retreat
From all th' immoderate Heat,
In which the frantick World does burn and sweat."

In one reservoir, where the reflections of the foliage seem to suggest a subaqueous

forest, hundreds of large fish disport themselves, and are fed by the people who visit this place as a pilgrimage. Great fat Asiatic carp most of them, wallowing about in the sunlit water, and taking on lovely combinations of colour as the light falls on their undulating sides; some with bronze body and pure purple fins and tail, others an exquisite olive green all over, while a few are a shimmering black, as they float about deep down among the reflections in rainbow-tinted shoals. Below the terrace of fishponds, the architect of this refreshing retreat has devised an exceedingly picturesque idea. Out of the castellated and buttressed retaining wall, charmingly relieved by niches containing deities, over twenty *makara*-headed spouts project, throwing out streams of water which fall, coolly splashing, into a tank beneath. The entire scheme fully coincides with Bacon's classical views on an ideal garden, especially where he states " that the water be in perpetual motion fed by a water higher than the pool, and delivered into it by fair spouts, and then discharged away under ground by some equality of bores, that

it stay little." Some of the *makaras*, which form the most striking feature of this terrace, are enormous creatures, capable of discharging a considerable volume of water in case of an overflow, but many are more sizeable monsters, and make excellent drinking fountains for the use of visitors. These spirited dragon-spouts are well carved in stone, but to add to their ferocious appearance, they are extensively painted in bright pigments, vermilion maws, with a blue and green scheme of colour for their heads and foliated shoulders. Set among the most ideal surroundings of mountain and forest, this delightful garden is generally peopled by groups of pilgrims, or *al fresco* picnic parties from the neighbouring hamlets, who with gaily dyed robes add a touch of life and colour to the scene. Sitting about in small parties under the shadow of the trees, or lolling on the grassy sward in the bright sunlight, with quaint little children flitting about like butterflies, these terraces make an attractive picture. Some of the younger ones disport themselves in the stream ejected from the great grim dragon's mouth, laughing and

without fear, although the monster face, with red dripping jaws, seems to be reaching out to devour their delicate bronze limbs. Their garments lie about, bright splashes of colour on the cool damp grass, the falling water bubbles and gurgles, little rills percolate from all sources, and the happy babbling song of the stream is heard dreamily issuing from everywhere.

It is hardly necessary to add that Balaji has its religious significance, and for this one must look into a small tank at the side and overhung with trees, near a temple decorated with Tantric carvings. Reclining full length in this receptacle, with all but the face submerged, is a carved stone figure of Narain, framed with a hood of snakes' heads projecting from the surface of the water. The statue of this deity is about ten feet long, and lies on a stone bed, the head and arms pillowed on stone cushions, all, with the exception of the features, being covered by the gently flowing crystal stream, the steady ripple of which suggests in a remarkable manner the movement of breathing. Small fish dart about,

or endeavour to hide in the modelled surfaces of the god; the dappled shadows of the overhanging trees move across the surface of the tank, which is confined within low moss-green walls. Four carved stone posts—as of an old-fashioned bed—rise out of the water at each corner, evidently the supports of a canopy which has long since disappeared, and the face now gazes calmly into the waving tree-tops and the sky. Transversely across the broad forehead are painted the three white parallel lines of the caste mark of Shiva, while the head is crowned with a wreath of brilliant yellow marigold flowers—real blossoms placed there by some devout pilgrim. The moving water laps gently the stony face, and the god smiles serenely from his cool liquid bed where he has lain day and night, through sunshine, rain, and cold, for nearly two hundred years.

The visitor naturally asks, What is the story of this stony god in his watery bed? And the answer is an interesting Hindu legend. Narain is the creator Brahma, who, according to Manu, was so called because the waters

(*nara*) were his first *ayana*, or place of motion. The name, as commonly used, applies to Vishnu, and is that under which he was first worshipped. He has been adopted by the Buddhist Newars and is worshipped by them, although not nearly to the same extent as by the Hindus. According to the ancient mythology of Nepal this deity, as Mahadeo, was present when the gods churned the ocean in order to obtain from it the water of immortality, and had drunk the poison which arose from the sea during the operation. This poison produced the most excruciating thirst, and caused a permanent blue discoloration of the throat, whence he received the name of Nila-kent or "Blue-neck." The story goes on to state that in his agony, and in order to assuage the burning thirst, he repaired to the snowy region of the Himalayas near Gosainthan, where, striking his *trisul* or trident into the mountain-side, three streams of water immediately gushed forth. These waters, collecting in a depression below, formed a lake which was called after the god, the Lake of Nila-kent. Mahadeo stretching himself

along its margin managed to assuage his thirst by drinking the water. It is in this mountain tarn that the pilgrims to distant Gosainthan fancy they can trace in the great unhewn rock lying in its centre the shape of the god reclining full length upon a bed of serpents. In continuation of this idea, the believers in the myth have constructed at least two much reduced representations of the lake and its deity in different parts of the Valley. One of these reproductions is smaller than the other, and is called the Bala (little) Nila-kent, which, having been abbreviated to Balaji, now gives the name to the garden wherein it reclines. But the complete story of this legend continues right up to almost recent times, for it appears that tradition has ruled that if the reigning monarch of Nepal should ever visit the greater Nila-kent his death will follow almost immediately. Balaji was therefore built subsequently to the larger representation, and to this statue of Narain in its beautiful terraced garden the kings of Nepal may pay their devotions with impunity.

For obvious reasons there is a close associa-



STONE TEMPLE IN THE DURBAR SQUARE AT BHATGAON.

tion between Tibet and the Valley, and the intercourse between that country and Nepal, commercially, religiously, and also artistically, has been constant for many centuries. Tibet obtained much of its Buddhism from Nepal, when its king in the sixth century A.D. contracted a marriage with a Newar princess, and how much of the beautiful Lamaistic art of that country has been produced by Nepalese craftsmen, specially retained at Lhassa for this purpose, is a subject open to considerable discussion. One authority has gone so far as to state that the best metal figures produced in Tibet are the work of Newar artisans who have emigrated from Nepal in view of the inducements held out to them by the heads of the great religious order at Lhassa. In these circumstances it is not strange that a certain amount of Lamaistic influence is observable in the Buddhist buildings of the Valley, and the ritual in some of its temples has obviously been imported from Tibet. The principal temple of Shambu-Nāth is under the charge of a community of Lamas, supervised by a "Lama

Superior" from Tibet, who lives in a *vihar* or monastic residence of his own situated in the vicinity of the temple. "This Lama is deputed by the religious authorities at Lhassa to watch over the spiritual interests of the numerous Tibetans who annually visit Nepal, and also to exercise a general superintendence over the repairs and expenditure of the two great Buddhist temples of Kasha (Bodhnāth) and Shambu-Nāth, which are the repositories of the sacred fire" (Oldfield). A number of *vihars* or monasteries, both large and small, are to be found scattered about the Valley, and several of these appear to be connected, in a greater or lesser degree, with the parent order in Tibet. Patan, ever the stronghold of Buddhism in Nepal, supports at least fifteen large and distinct *vihars* at the present day, all of which are buildings possessing characteristic architecture and a wealth of decorative accessories. Probably the most interesting, and, according to its records, the oldest building in the city, is the "Unko Vihar," or, to give this monastery its full name, the "Rudra Varna Maha Vihar." It

is said to have been founded by a Newar Raja, Sheo Deo Brahma, and as an indication of its age existing records state that it required restoring as early as 880 A.D., which pious act was performed by Raja Rudra Deo, hence its name. While returning from a ramble among the alleys and byways of this wonderful old town, the writer happened to catch sight of this historic pile, a dark doorway with a medley of brass glinting in the dying sunlight attracting his eye, and the following description was taken down at the time.

As usual a crowd gathered around and choked the narrow gully, as I showed my interest, and, addressing the motley group collectively, I asked if a stranger might be permitted to enter the shrine. An animated discussion occurred, but, after a time, as no serious objection was raised, I passed through the first door. Beyond this lay a passage, profusely ornamented with heavy wood-carving, and through an opening at the far end a vision of colour and metalwork drew me on. Again the question was asked whether

the entry of an unbeliever was forbidden, and again a long consultation among the attendant throng took place, with a small prospect of any unanimous decision either way. In all these matters the difficulty is to find one in authority, as each individual vociferated an opinion, but each apparently without any actual right or reason. It is, however, only fair to add here that, except in one or two isolated cases, the most courteous and broad-minded reception was accorded to all requests for admission into any shrine, temple, or other holy building within Nepalese territory. Eventually the problem was solved by an offer on my part to dispense with my boots, and my orderly, removing his shoes together with what appeared still more important, his *kookri* (Gurkha knife), we were laughingly admitted into the sacred precincts of the Vihar. During the discussion it transpired that the reason why no conclusion regarding my right of entry could be arrived at, was because according to report no European had ever been allowed inside the building before—in fact, it was doubtful

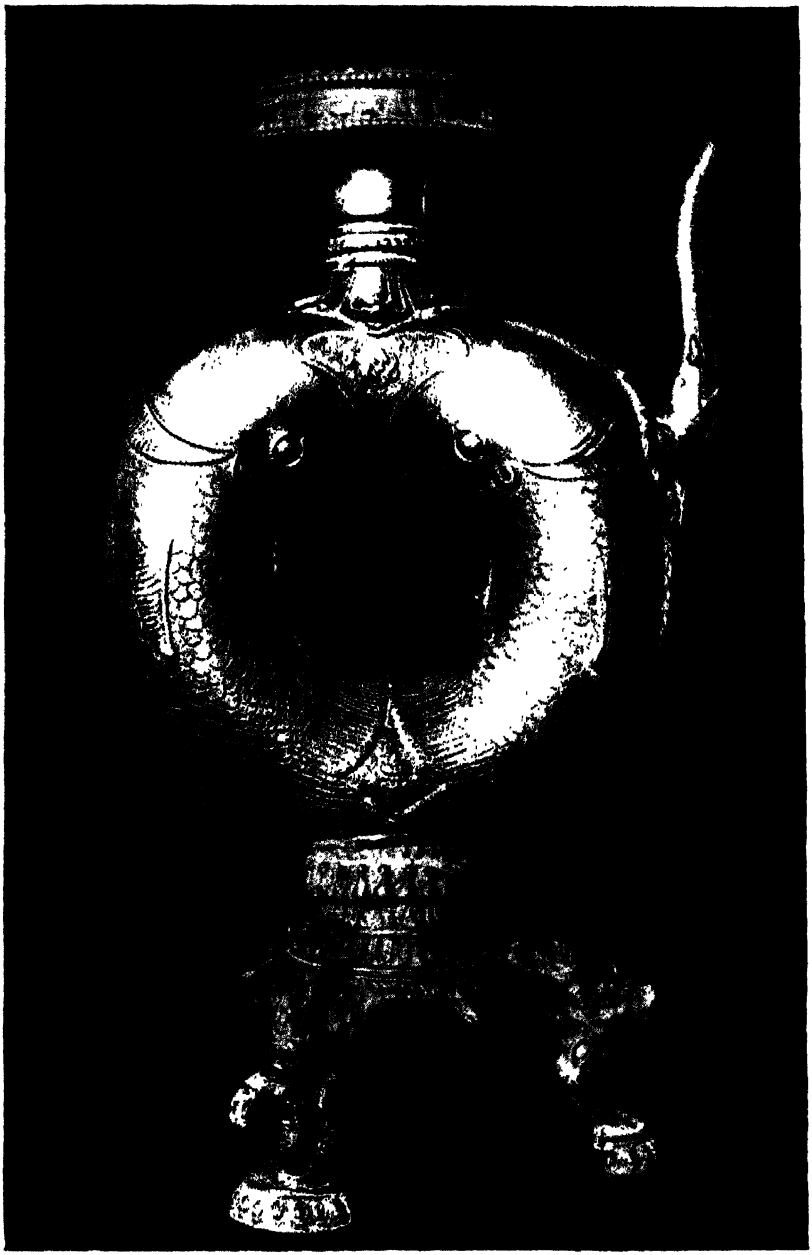
whether any similar application had previously been made, hence the variety of opinions among the increasing throng of onlookers. Through the low archway therefore in my stockinged feet I bobbed, and the sight which met my eyes almost took my breath away. A crowded fantasy of gilt Buddhas, Bodhisatvas, Lamas, Garudas, rows of metal deities, massive bronze bells, and all the artistic attributes of the Buddhist, Lamaist, and Hindu religions, floated before my eyes. All the arts of Nepal seemed to be gathered in this one small courtyard and pagoda, with its carved and painted wood and plates of burnished brass as a background; right up into several stories it continued, finishing in a great gilt finial which flashed above like molten gold in the light of the dying sun. But hardly had I been permitted one short view of this absorbing picture, hemmed in by a packed mass of people attracted from the surrounding rabbit-warren of houses by my presence, when, suddenly, without any apparent cause, the whole crowd was thrown into violent commotion; men backed them-

selves against the walls or retired into recesses, children, with which the place swarmed, were swept to the sides in startled and crying heaps, while I was pushed unceremoniously from the doorway into a tight corner, jammed between a huge metal elephant with its rider nearly half life-size, and a dragon crawling up a lintel, whose spines of bronze pressed heavily into my back. Too astonished to attempt resistance I crouched in my uncomfortable position, while a passage was made through the living mass to the door, the scared children were hushed, and a solemn silence fell where before had been noise and laughter. Then broke on my ears the faint methodical sound of a tinkling bell some distance away, and a hoarse voice in my ear informed me that the "Great Lama arrives." The thin notes of the bell came nearer and nearer, visions of a grey-haired High-Priest with richly embroidered vestments, acolytes and incense, and all the gorgeous panoply of a religious procession, flashed across my mind, as it became evident that these suddenly improvised preparations

were in view of some portion of an important Buddhist ceremonial. The bell had now reached the outer door and was rapidly approaching, the crowd became more impressively hushed and awed; nearer it advanced until I could tell it would pass through the entrance at the side of which I painfully crouched. And then the "Great Lama" came. I was astonished. A shabby diminutive boy of about ten years of age, bareheaded, wearing a greasy sort of "half coat" cut in a special fashion, and a dark maroon skirt, looking neither to the right nor the left passed rapidly down the human lane prepared for him, round the courtyard and into the darkness of the temple door. In one hand he held a wand, and suspended from his neck by a cord was a largish bell, which, falling on to his projecting waist-band, was jerked forward at every step, and in this manner caused to ring. Apparently oblivious of his surroundings, yet conscious of his unique position, and that the way would be prepared for his coming, he passed like an automaton before my eyes and disappeared. The crowd and myself

breathed again, and I was allowed to dislodge my cramped body from between the elephant and dragon, and gaze around in the rapidly fading light at the wealth of art and ornament with which this extraordinary building was covered. In front a large metal "thunderbolt" lay enthroned amid a background of deities in niches, applied on the carved wood or riveted on to brass mouldings or embossed panels. On each side were metal screens of boldly hammered patterns with lifelike bronze lizards crawling over the blank spaces. But the light began to die out from the sky; as I looked the darkness came on apace, and all faded into a jumble of leering deities and scrambling griffins framed in an atmosphere of gloom. White slits of eyes blinked at me from dark corners, and strange animals glowered from diapers and doorways, so I reluctantly left this fascinating building with the feeling that I had seen one of the weirdest sights in the whole of Nepal.

As in India, two of the most popular festivals in Nepal are those of the "Dassera" and the "Dewali," and coming as they usually do



BRASS TEMPLE UTENSIL FROM PATAN.

in immediate sequence, for a period extending over almost a month the Valley is given up to prayer, feast, and rejoicing. Added to these, one of the strange recreations of the festival, and one that seems difficult to reconcile with any religious function, is that of gambling. It is true that a portion of this holiday time is considered sacred to Lakshmi, the goddess of good fortune, and luck and gambling are not widely separated, but the fact remains that cards, dice, and kindred pastimes are indulged in excessively all over India by those who observe this feast. In Nepal this particular festival is the only time when public gambling is permitted by the authorities, and for several days it is carried to excess, the whole State being engaged in some form of licensed play. Within recent years strenuous efforts have been made by the administration to limit the number of days devoted to this sport, with very satisfactory results, and the evils attendant on this delirious outburst have been considerably mitigated. Extraordinary stories are told of the stakes which have been won and

lost on these occasions, wives and children sometimes being gambled for, as the Nepali has the reputation for being an inveterate gamester. Wright states that "one man is said to have cut off his left hand and put it down under a cloth as his stake. On winning the game, he insisted on his opponent cutting off his hand, or else restoring all the money which he had previously won."

At this festival the signal is given by the authorities that the gambling may begin by the firing of a gun. Immediately every occupation is thrown to the winds, the streets are packed with little groups, and the city squares become one mass of excited people, as the entire place is simultaneously strewn with tables of "pice" and cowries. Each house and shop has its gambling party, all earnestly engaged in some form of play, either cards, dice, or "Tommy dod." The card game is generally a kind of three-card trick, European cards are mostly employed, but the old Indian "tash" is not uncommon, the circular papier-mâché article of great antiquity being sometimes seen, but this

picturesque disc is rapidly dying out. When the common paper cards are used it is considered always correct to deal from the bottom, and as the packs are well thumbed and often damaged, it is not unusual for certain cards to be easily identified by all immediately they have left the dealer's hand, but this only seems to increase the hilarity of the players. The "Tommy dod" is played with cowries, fifteen of these being taken in the hand, shaken and thrown down on a board, the company betting on which side the most turn up, the split side or the smooth. People seem to drift from one "table" to another during the course of the night, for this aspect of the festival goes on without a break for some days, and where stakes run high, or the betting is keen, excited crowds gather round, cheering lustily at any unexpected turn of the game.

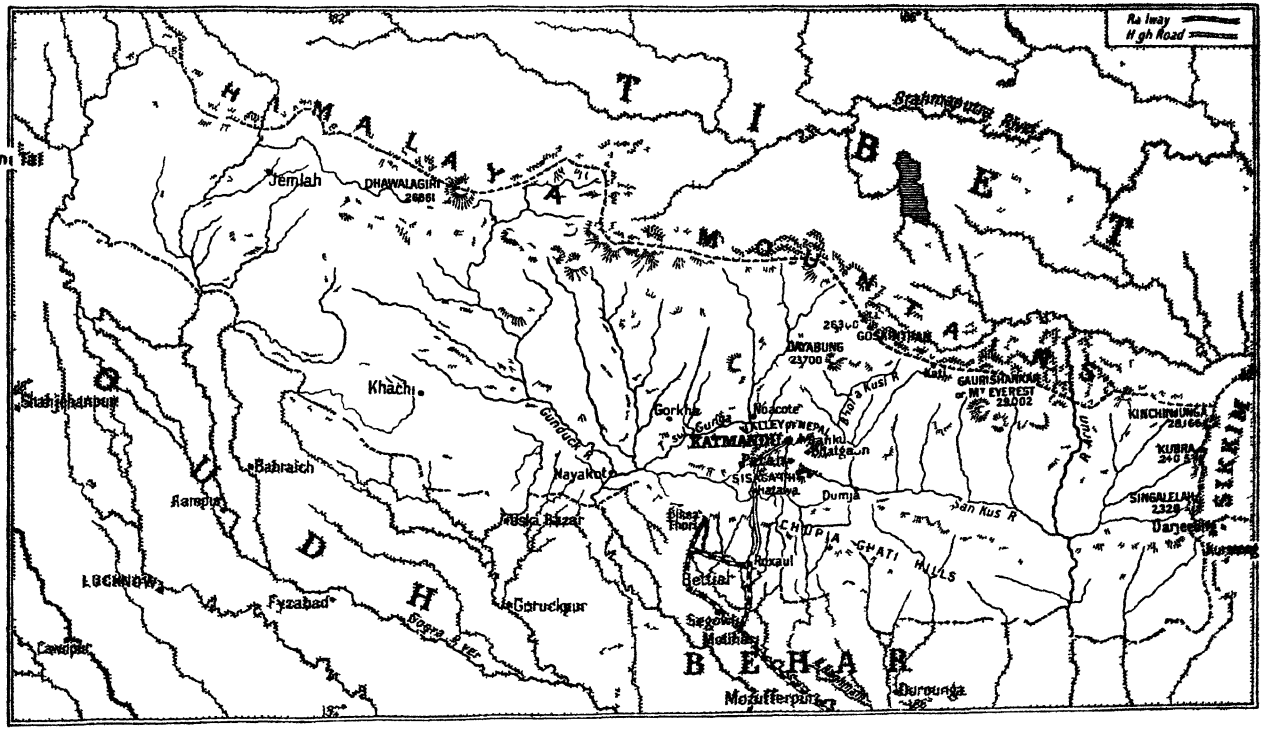
On the tenth and last day of the Dassera festival, it is usual for the Nepali to visit his superiors, in order to pay his respects and at the same time to present a small gift as a token of the *burra din* or "great day"

of the year. The custom is, in one form or another, almost universal, and in India on Christmas Day it is not unusual for the European resident to be considerably embarrassed by the huge quantities of miscellaneous food, flowers, and fruit contributed by his subordinates to the "Protector," out of the fulness of their hearts. This manner of celebrating any festive occasion is in the East of great antiquity, and the ancient basreliefs of Egypt often depict interminable processions of menials, bearing in that characteristic attitude of the style, trays of good things as a thank-offering to their overlord. To be suddenly confronted with one of these pageants in the flesh, as if the mute figures had stepped down from the granite wall on which they had stood for thirty centuries, into the life of the present day, is naturally somewhat startling, but such is what takes place in the streets of Katmandu on every *burra din* of the Dassera. A long procession of five hundred servants, marching two and two, each one carrying his gift to the Maharaja, is one of the lesser sights at this time of peace

and goodwill. These bearers are marshalled by soldiers and attendants on horseback, the leading man carrying a large silver candelabra, while the others of the front rank bear silver sticks, gold and silver goblets, and other valuable vessels. All these articles are carried on salvers draped with pink and green embroidered gauze coverings. Following the contingent entrusted with these precious utensils walk individuals in pairs, each holding a silver tray covered with the same coloured fabric, and containing all sorts of edibles such as sweetmeats, fruits, vegetables, and other delicacies of a like nature—great water-melons, huge bunches of bananas, and mounds of luscious peaches—the bearers groaning and perspiring under the weight of their offerings. After these march a similar group, but their burdens consist of various objects cunningly moulded in coloured sugar, such as castles and pavilions, summer-houses and pagodas, and all the picturesque habitations that man can conceive. These are succeeded by a file carrying horsemen and prancing chargers and all manner of gaily caparisoned steeds, each

made up of sugar outlined in various bright colours. Horses singly and in groups, domestic and untamed, then take their place, all modelled in the same material, and are followed by clever representations of every known animal—buffaloes, dogs, tigers, leopards, etc., each most truthfully portrayed. More mounds of peaches, pears, melons, and other fruits then pass by, with varicgated sweetmeats devised in numerous fantastic forms and in bewildering succession. Each bearer, conscious of his individual importance, solemnly carries his silver tray gracefully draped with the pink embroidered gauze in the orthodox manner that long usage has ordained for this performance. As the procession wends its way through the rabble attracted by this tempting display the remarks made by these onlookers are amusingly expressive, some with glistening eyes and longing looks naming audibly and unctuously each separate delectable as it passes so close within their grasp. But to the traveller the mind instinctively turns to a parched land in another continent, where, on a limestone

wall carved by a hand now stilled three thousand years, an identical scene is depicted as it took place under the Pharaohs, tier upon tier of dark-skinned menials, each in the conventional costume and attitude, and bearing similar gifts on trays unto the king. There are the salvers of fruits and baked meats, the lotus flowers and other offerings; and here in Nepal the same scene was being enacted as in the days of the Israelites, with all the pomp, ceremony, and meaning of that bygone age.



SKETCH MAP OF NEPAL

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